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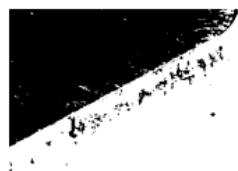
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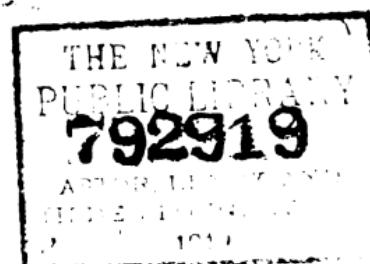
THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS GREVILLE.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
INTERESTING MEMOIRS,

VOL. II.

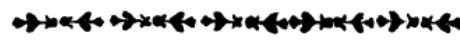
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THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS GREVILLE.



LETTER LVII.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert,

Harwood.

FOR two days past, my beloved friend, I have been unable to hold my pen. The depression of spirits occasioned by my mother's illness, and my own perplexity, received such an addition by the arrival of your letter, as wholly overcame me.

When I read that, at the same instant I had been deplored the melancholy prospect of a separation from the best of mothers, death had threatened to deprive me also of the kindest, most endeared of friends, *I was alarmed and terrified beyond measure. I thought all I loved were going to*

MISS GREVILLE.

abandon me ; and even now cannot enjoy my safety, (like a wretch just escaped shipwreck), for reflecting on my late imminent danger.

It is the observation of experience, that misfortunes seldom come single. Perhaps it is ordained in mercy to mankind, that our attention should be diverted from dwelling too long on one object, that our activity (in which consists our safety) should be excited by a variety of troubles, and the tide of our affliction rendered less impetuous and destructive, by being divided into several channels.

Oh, my friend ! how do such trying situations endear to us the great truths of religion ! It is religion which stills the violence of passion, and sooths the most turbulent to peace. It is that which, in the darkest hour of adversity, illumines and cheers the soul of man. It is that which proves the real dignity of our nature, by discovering to us our origin and destination. It is that alone which converts the fearful apprehension of a mortal separation, into the confirmed hope of an everlasting reunion, with all those whom our souls hold dear.

My mother and I were sitting together last night, when a servant from

Sir

Sir Charles brought her the following letter.

To the Honourable Mrs. Greville.

Grove.

DEAR MADAM,

THE time being fixed for the sale of Harwood, I made offer to purchase it from the creditors, by private bargain.

The affair was concluded this morning; and I have the satisfaction to assure you, that all demands on the estate are discharged. To a mind of such feeling and rectitude as yours, I know this circumstance will afford sincere pleasure.

But as I am confident I have paid much less than the real value of the estate, permit me, dear Mrs. Greville, to present you with the reversion of five thousand pounds, which would probably have accrued to you, had the affair become a public transaction; and to request, that you will continue to possess the house and furniture, as I have one in town, larger than is requisite for my family.

The pleasure of contributing to your ease and comfort, especially at this trying juncture, and of seeing Miss Greville placed in that independence, to which her birth and merit give her an unquestion-

able right, will far more than repay any obligation, which you may perhaps imagine is conferred on you, by your devoted and most humble servant,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

My mother put this letter into my hands: it was wet with her tears: she uttered not a word: but the language of her looks sufficiently expressed the feelings of her soul, and conveyed them to mine with a force and eloquence that mock description.

Maria! I am undone! Who can resist generosity like this? Yes: I will conquer this rebellious heart:—I will tear from thence an image which dishonours the temple it usurps; which is black with crimes of the deepest dye; perfidy, inconstancy, ingratitude. I will banish Rivers from this bosom for ever; and welcome the noble, the generous Mortimer in his place. O write, Maria! write, and strengthen my feeble resolutions. For a moment my heart exults in the consciousness of its own rectitude, and virtuous exertions. But soon the tide of nature and frailty returns; soon it sinks with apprehension, trembles with doubt, and sickens with despair. I will write no more.

JULIA GREVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER LVIII.

Colonel Rivers to Captain Stanley. ••

Charlestown.

HEAVENS, Stanley! what do you tell me? You amaze, you transport me. Can I credit my senses? Is Julia Greville still unmarried? Has she seen the infamous Rochdale in his true colours? Does she repent of her injustice to him who has lived only to love her? Does she at length perceive, that happiness and ambition are inconsistent; and resolve for ever, to abjure an error, that had so nearly ruined her peace? Stanley, could you indeed assure me of all this, she might still be mine,—I might still be happy.

But how, my friend, can we account for her strange conduct? How can a heart of the smallest delicacy, unite itself with one that can thus lightly—thus unaccountably wander? Oh that I had never been blessed with her affection, or never lived to deplore the loss of it!

A gleam of comfort suddenly breaks in on my benighted soul. I reflect, that Julia herself has never assured me of a fact, which only from her own lips I ought to have believed credible. Rochdale beloved by Julia! My friend, it cannot be. And

yet with such proofs—proofs almost incontestable, what am I to think! I am bewildered, amazed, distracted,—I can believe any thing, but that Julia Greville has forgotten and renounced me!

Heavens! and is there then a possibility that I may have been deceived? that I have unjustly suspected her faith, who still fondly loves me—that I have injured, by my unpardonable folly, the most blameless, the most admirable of her sex? That, at this very moment, when she, believing me perfidious and ungrateful—reproaching me with my supposed infidelity,—accusing me as the cause of her distress,—still generous, still constant, is lamenting my absence, and wishing, vainly wishing for my return?—perhaps is already become the victim of my barbarous credulity. Defend me, Heaven! from that maddening thought.

But I am already distracted. I rave, Stanley; it cannot, cannot be. Has she not renounced and abandoned me? Has she not remained unmoved by my misery, deaf to my complaints, and obstinately silent, in spite of my most tender remonstrances?

My friend, have compassion on my wretchedness. Write, I conjure you, write to your aunt, without losing a moment. Hasten, and relieve me from agonizing suspense.

suspence. Learn what has so long delayed a marriage, of the certainty of which we were so well assured.

But what do I say? If I have been once so, may I not again be deceived!

I will go instantly to Lord M—, and demand leave of absence, for which my declining health furnishes a sufficient pretext.

Though urged by my physicians, to return to my native air, I have hitherto enjoined them silence on that head. Can health of body be valuable to him whose deadly sickness is seated in the heart?

But now the desire of life returns. The feeble hope rekindled by your last letter, burns every hour brighter and brighter. Yes, Stanley; on that hope, however doubtful, hangs all my earthly good.

A bare possibility has altered my firmest resolution, never to abandon my post, till I should be no longer able to maintain it. But now, what is fame, glory, interest? they vanish before the most distant hope of recovering my fondly beloved Julia!

I go then to solicit permission to return to England, of which Lord M.'s humanity will make me secure. Oh, Stanley! in what a disordered, what a distracting state is my mind! One moment all expectation, the next sunk in despondent apprehension.

A few short weeks must terminate the dreadful conflict, and fix your friend the happiest or most wretched of mankind.

GEORGE RIVERS.

LETTER LIX.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

MY dearest mother grows worse and worse. Is it possible that, in such a situation, I should think of entering into engagements, which I am wholly unable to fulfil! Alas, Maria! what will become of me? I cannot describe to you the perturbation of my mind, nor the sickness of soul, and total indifference to life, I experience, as often as I review the dismal prospects with which I am surrounded. I tremble to think of forming a connection, which might one day expose me to such killing sorrow, as that which has long preyed on the heart of the best of women; and which nothing but the aid of Heaven, joined to her superior goodness, enabled her patiently to endure. Alas, my friend! though the soul has been unshaken amid the storm of adversity, the frail, the mortal habitation, is daily yielding to its cruel violence.

Whilst

Whilst my dear parent is retired to rest, I have strolled down the side of the river as far as the church-yard. It is a scene that makes me thoughtful, but never melancholy. Do I deceive myself, in believing, that the friend of my heart will be pleased to read the silent language of mine, whilst ruminating beside the lowly receptacles of the dead? those humble mansions, that flatter not their vanity, but yield most important instruction to the living.

“ How beautifully solemn is the scene that surrounds me! The moon, rising from behind the hill, is enlightening the dark front of the venerable abbey, which is checkered at times by the interposing branches of a single tree, bending with age, and waving slowly to the slightest breath, in a kind of lifeless sadness.

“ The queen of heaven now suddenly unveils her radiance; and her bright beams glittering on the dewy graves, serve to instruct me in the boastless annals of those, who, but for these frail memorials, had long since been forgotten. Ye harmless inhabitants of this peaceful dwelling, how do I envy you your secure repose! When — Oh when shall I escape from this disturbed, disorderly scene, to enjoy rest, unbroken like yours! Contented with your native obscurity, ungentle passions never rankled in your bosom, nor did the arts of seduction

seduction corrupt your heart. Ye knew not to reason, because ye had neither vice to disguise, nor vanity to indulge; but meekly submitting yourselves to be taught of God, ye were contented with the plain path of duty, which infinite wisdom had prescribed, and thankfully accepted for your guide, that word of truth, which infinite goodness had bestowed. Happy in your native simplicity, ye were strangers to the arts of ambition and avarice, the mortifications of pride, and the feverish thirst of fame. Your humble labours were labours of love: ye have rested from them, but they shall not go unrewarded. Did ye not reap the blessed fruits o' them, even whilst on earth? When ye were in affliction, did not sympathy console you? When in poverty, did not liberality sustain you? When ye languished in sickness, did not the Almighty himself smooth your bed?—

“ What means this thrilling horror that steals through my veins, as I approach nearer these lonely mansions, where rest the once gay companions of my youth? Is it the effect of superstitious fear, or the dreams of a disordered imagination, that thus agitate my feeble frame, and unhinge my disordered mind? No; it is the more forcible language of nature, that shuns from the thought of dissolution with abhorrence. It is that secret powerful instinct, that watchful sentinel, appointed

pointed by the wise Creator, to guard the mysterious passage from life to death, which opposes the rash deed of violence, checks the wild tyranny of sorrow, and snatches the uplifted dagger from the hand of despair.

“ I will obey its dictates. Yet ere I go, let me reflect — What have I to fear from the dissolution of this mortal frame, or the solemn pageantry of woe that surrounds me. When the frail tenement shall moulder in ruins, no longer concerned in the fate of its earthly habitation, the heavenly inhabitant shall ascend to its everlasting abode; and, disincumbered from the shackles of mortality, the immaterial and immortal spirit, possessing the glorious liberty of the sons of God, shall rejoice eternally in his presence, with whom is the fountain of life, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

“ Farewell, ye neglected, ye silent tenants of the tomb! O that I might soon sleep in peace like you! then should the cares that perplex, the hopes that seduce, and the sorrows that pierce my heart, all vanish like a dream, and be forgotten for ever.”

On returning from my solitary ramble, I found my dear mother better than for several days past. Our conversation naturally turned on him, whose worth daily increases

increases that esteem, which I would give the world to cherish, till it should become every thing he wishes. Maria! how astonishing is the inconsistency of our minds! how capricious the feelings of our hearts! Though the name of Rivers scarce ever passes these lips, to which I have enjoined a death-like silence on the subject; though I strive to banish him from my thoughts through the day, no sooner do I close my eyes, than my unfettered imagination hurries me to those dire scenes, where War is carrying distress and desolation; where, at this moment, sick, wounded, dying perhaps, the guilty, yet unfortunate Rivers, deserted of every friend, abandoned of every hope, is falling a victim to that insatiate destroyer of the human race. Ah, ungrate! unconscious of the worth of that treasure thou scornest, why, Oh why cannot I too forget? Why cannot I lose either the memory of thy former virtues and affection, or of thy present ingratitude and perfidy?

Sir Charles has been absent for two days, under pretence of indisposition; but, in reality, I believe, to avoid those acknowledgments, which his late noble conduct so amply merits.—He is below, Maria, and sends to request the favour of my company. Every time we meet, I feel more and more embarrassed. Judge, if his late conduct

conduct is calculated to relieve me from the painful consciousness with which my heart is oppressed.

—Maria! at length my fate is determined, my promise irrevocably given; and, from this moment, I renounce every thought of the unworthy Rivers, and devote every subsequent hour of my life, to the noble, the generous, the affectionate Mortimer.

On entering the parlour, my former suspicion was confirmed; and I was ashamed to condole with him on account of indisposition, whilst ~~his~~ looks indicated the most perfect health. He tenderly reproached me for paying so little regard to mine; and my mother joined him in entreating me to make an excursion as far as Mrs. Clifford's, whom I had never seen since my father's death. We did so, and found her sitting with little Clara in her lap, whom she was teaching to read. She was in deep mourning, though not in a widow's habit. There was a delicacy in this conduct that pleased me much.

Her spirits were so low, she could hardly speak without shedding tears; but after sitting an hour, she grew somewhat easier, and talked of her obligations to our kindness, in the warmest, but most delicate terms. Every moment we found fresh cause to admire her fine sense, and agreeable

able manners. We took our leave, and on our way home, Sir Charles sent his servant with an apology to Lord Cleveland, as he had promised my mother to return to dinner. No sooner was he gone, than we engaged in a very interesting conversation ; and the weather being extremely hot, walked our horses great part of the way. On coming to a cross road, which was very rough, Sir Charles holding the reins too loose, his horse came down in a moment with such violence, that he threw his master to a considerable distance.

Sir Charles recovered himself; but, on looking about, I saw the blood trickling from his temples. I cannot express the horror I felt at that moment. I sprung from my horse, and flew to his assistance. He treated the accident as a trifle ; took my hand, and tenderly pressing it between his, assured me, that he felt no pain, but what arose from giving me uneasiness. Whilst he was speaking, I saw him change colour, he reeled back some paces, and grew so faint, that he was forced to support himself against a tree, to prevent his falling to the ground. My apprehensions became so violent, and I trembled so much, I could hardly stand. Indeed, till that moment, I knew not how dear he was to me. I entreated him to sit down on the grass, chafed his temples with my hand-kerchief,

kerchief, and supported him in my arms. In a few minutes he recovered from the stupor occasioned by the fall, and, looking up to me with inexpressible sweetneſſ —“O Julia! ſaid he, Oh my angel! what would I give to owe to your love, what I receive from your compassion.” The affeſting tone in which he uttered these words, reminded me of my ſituation. My arm was ſtill round him; I hauſtily withdrew it; and, covered with bluſhes, was about to retire to a greater diſtance. He ſeized my hand, and pressing it to his boſom, “Unkind Julia! cried he, will you then leave me in this ſituation? Oh! ſickneſſ, death were more ſupportable than this conſtant indifference.” “I am not indiſterent, Sir Charles, replied I; my fears at this moment witness for me.” “Ah, Julia! exclaimed he with anguifh, you deceiver yourſelf: you fear for my death, but you wiſh not for my life” “Good Heavens, Sir Charles, cried I with emotion, ſurely you cannot think ſo. I wiſh your life—your happiness. I anxiouſly wiſh to be able—to”—“O what, my Julia! (gazing on me), what do you anxiouſly wiſh?” interrupted he eagerly. “I wiſh, Sir Charles, to—to,—“To make me bleſſed—to be my wife,” exclaimed he, tranſported. I did not retract what had just eſcaped me. This aſtent, though perhaps

haps too rashly given, was that of my heart, as well as of my duty, Maria. The danger to which I saw Sir Charles exposed, awakened in my bosom emotions so tender, that I almost persuade myself I have been unjust, in so long accusing myself of indifference to my kind and generous benefactor. The wound he received by the fall, proved to be very slight; and though some uneasiness remained from the violence of the shock, by the time we reached Hardwood, scarce any traces of it were visible. The liveliest joy sparkled in his eyes, and diffused over his countenance a gay and most agreeable expression. On my quitting the room, he told my mother of the promise I had given him, and entreated her to join with him, in urging the early performance of it. He likewise proposed to her, to pay a visit to the hot wells at Bristol, which, he flattered himself, would have a salutary effect on her constitution. At that moment I entered the room; she cheerfully consented to the plan, and holding out her arms to embrace me, "I shall now value health, my Julia—I shall now wish to live a little longer, since I am confident I shall see my beloved child happy."

On reviewing the important occurrences of this day, Maria, I strive to persuade myself I have acted aright; yet there are moments of weakness, when the conviction

tion of reason yields but small consolation to the heart. The vigour of our minds is subject to great varieties; and, in scrutinizing any question, circumstances at one time strike our attention, which at another are wholly overlooked. Hence arises a degree of hesitation, in pronouncing on our own conduct, highly painful and perplexing; and hence, at this moment, I experience a doubtfulness with respect to mine, which is distressing beyond description.

Write to me, dearest Maria. Remind me of the motives by which I have been influenced. Say every thing you can, consistently with truth, to soothe, console, and encourage me. You possess the power of reconciling me to myself: it is a dangerous privilege, but you will use it with discretion.

Yours ever,

JULIA GREVILLE.



LETTER LX.

Miss Herbert to Miss Greville.

London.

YES, with truth I can applaud your conduct; I can say every thing to soothe, to encourage my friend. I can even foresee,

see, that her fate will be as far superior in happiness to the common lot of mortals, as she is superior to them in rectitude and true goodness.

Those connections, my Julia, are ever the most lasting, whose rise is spontaneous, and whose progress gradual. What is the cause that we see so few happy marriages? What, but their being hastily contracted, from motives of interest, ambition, or convenience alone. In forming this connection, the parties shew a due regard to every circumstance, but that which is the most essential of all, temper. When we select a partner, from the discovery of real merit, our self-love is agreeably soothed with the idea of our own penetration. His perfections slowly and gradually develop themselves; we have time also to discover his faults: hence arises a just and lasting judgment. Such a friendship is matured by time. The lovers adopt each others sentiments, their characters in some measure change, and they become at once more amiable, and more endeared to each other, by the assimilation.

Such has been the progress of that tender and animated esteem, by which you and Sir Charles are now united. Happy may your union prove! It will, it must be happy!

I wish

I wish I could inspire you with a portion of Lucy's admirable spirits. I begged her to read to me this morning, whilst I was dressing, a favourite passage from a sermon of the Bishop of Chester, which I shall inclose in this letter, hoping that one day my amiable friend may have occasion to enforce the doctrine of this pious and elegant writer. She took up the book, and fixing her eyes on the glass, in a solemn and affected tone began—“Of all the works of beauty and wisdom, with which Nature hath adorned this lower creation, there is none which we contemplate with such pleasure and admiration as a fine face! especially when that face is one's own.” I could not help smiling at this folly, but judged it proper to lecture her gravely on her giddiness and levity. She listened with much composure, dropped me a low curtesy, and left the room. Then returning in a minute, “I protest, my dear Maria, your serious lecture put every thing else out of my head. I have just got this morning a beautiful picture of Minerva, which more exactly resembles my idea of that goddess than any I have yet seen. Here,” continued she, “judge for yourself. Tell me, have you ever beheld a countenance so serious, yet so pleasing? where the dignity that commands, *and the sweetness* that invites, are so charmingly

charmingly blended" She held out her pocket-book, but, instead of a fine painting, I found nothing there but a mirror.

Adieu, dearest Julia. May your piety, humanity, and ingenuity, be to you unfailing springs of the purest enjoyment! When you would derive pleasure from being esteemed and beloved, if degree can give worth to these affections, think of

Your

MARIA HERBERT.



LETTER LXI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr. Belford.

Grove.

AT length, my friend, my happiness is complete, and I am convinced of my folly, in shutting my eyes so long to the truth.

Julia, the gentlest, the most amiable of women—Yes, Julia loves. An accident yesterday betrayed the delightful secret, and revealed those enchanting, those lively sentiments, which unequalled modesty has hitherto concealed.

No longer, my dear Belford, am I under the painful necessity of imposing on myself

myself continual restraint. No longer do I dread offending my Julia by the discovery of sentiments too tender to be dismended, too ardent to be concealed. No longer does she decline hearing those artless expressions of love, which, insensibly mingling with those of pity, gain access to her gentle heart, without alarming, or greatly agitating it. Now, now indeed, I can with propriety, employ for her and her mother, those advantages which fortune supplies, or rather which Providence commits to our care, as means of that happiness which it thus puts in our own power to obtain, by the proper application of its gifts. Now duty demands, what inclination always suggested; and converts acts of generosity, into expressions of gratitude. My sweet angel still appears thoughtful and serious, but her reserve is evidently that of modesty, not indifference; and she has lost that look of depressing melancholy, which used to pain my very soul. She confides to me all her inquietudes, particularly those respecting her much beloved parent; and if our mutual attachment does not partake of those transports which youthful enthusiasm, rather than titled esteem, gives rise, it has all that tenderness and delicacy, which suits with modesty and innocence like hers, and is more

more agreeable to the notions I have ever entertained on that subject.

Perhaps you will think me whimsical, when I confess, that I should wish my wife to feel passion, but never to express it. Sensibility is the most endearing charm of the sex; but the turbulence of passion is incompatible, in my opinion, either with that innate delicacy, or quick sense of propriety, which is inseparable from an elegant and truly virtuous female mind.

How much happiness do I promise myself in the society of so amiable, so sensible a companion! How delightful will be the task, of still farther cultivating that fine understanding and just taste, with which Heaven has distinguished this lovely young creature! and who, by the mere force of superior talents, has so far conquered all the obstacles which her late situation threw in the way of her improvement, as to appear, with singular grace and propriety, even in the most difficult circumstances. But good sense is indeed "a science fairly worth the seven." A propos on this subject. Though I do not wish to see women become learned, we certainly judge very ill, in depriving them of such branches of knowledge, as tend, by enlightening their understanding, and diversifying their studies, to divert their minds from those frivolous pursuits, which invariably corrupt their

their taste, dissipate their thoughts, and at last fatally influence their conduct. By being early taught a proper respect for themselves, and just notions of their own importance, women in general would become more respectable. To the want of this proper pride, and these elegant amusements, much of the misconduct, too apparent of late years in the fashionable world, may justly, I think, be attributed. It is consequently, with the utmost satisfaction, every friend to the interests of society, must observe, the successful attempts daily made to improve the mode of female education; especially by those of the sex, whose distinguished virtue bears testimony to the importance of their precepts.

My friend's known liberality of sentiment, assures me of the approbation of those of his

Affectionate and faithful
CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER LXII.

Miss Greville to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

YOUR approbation, so warmly expressed, my dearest Maria, has afforded

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me

me all the satisfaction your friendly heart can wish.

At present I have need of every support; for my poor mother's weakness increases daily, and alarms me so much, that I cannot conceal my apprehensions. Sir Charles kindly endeavours to moderate them; but he is too good, and too sensible, to attempt deceiving me with false hopes, and her danger is apparent to every one who sees her. He is anxious that we should set out for Bristol without delay; but I begin to fear this will be impracticable.

Alas, Maria! my first and fondest hope is disappointed, that of giving happiness to my excellent parent;—she will never live to witness mine! Ah! should my next be alike fruitless!—Should my endeavours to please, to render happy, the man who is about to entrust me with his peace, his honour—My head runs giddy with the thought!—Maria! distress has made an absolute coward of me.

Sir Charles kindly proposed, that we should again visit Mrs. Clifford, before leaving Harwood, that we might concert together some plan for her future establishment. We set out accordingly; when we reached the spot where Sir Charles's horse fell, “I shall never pass this way without shuddering with horror, said I, for the danger

ger to which I saw you expos'd." "And I," replied he with vivacity, "shall regard it as the scene of the most fortunate event of my life." When we arrived at the cottage, we found Mrs. Clifford, as usual, at work, but still so dejected, that it required all Sir Charles's delicacy and management to engage her in conversation. On hinting his wishes and mine, to see her agreeably settled, she said, "she could not support the idea of hanging a burden on friends so generous, and that she was resolved to go out into the world, that she might not only work for her own subsistence, but be enabled to give her little Clara proper education." She added, "that as she was extremely neat at her needle, she would prefer attending on a lady to any other occupation." Then, with a deep sigh, in a low voice, she added, "I believe I am qualified for a governess; but who will entrust their children to my care?" I begged her to make her mind easy, till our return from Bristol, when we would be better able to fix on a proper department for her, than the present distress of our family would permit.

As we returned home, "I wish much to know your opinion of Mrs. Clifford's schemes, Miss Greville," said Sir Charles. "I beg you will tell me yours, Sir," said I. "I by no means think solitude proper

for a mind in the situation of hers," replied he, "otherwise we might easily continue her in her present way of life. The bustle of the world, I should fear, would prove equally unfavourable. But if my Julia would not think me too presumptuous, and already encroaching too far on the indulgence, I could look forward a little, and point out a situation, which, I think, would both be suitable and agreeable, and make her as easy as the memory of her misfortunes will permit her to be. To superintend a family so regular and happy, as that which I hope will soon reside at Hartwood, would occupy, without fatiguing her; and a heart, long broken by harshness and neglect, would taste the sweetest consolation, in the approbation of so tender and indulgent a mistress." I blushed, and holding out my hand to Sir Charles, "What an enchanting art do you possess," said I, "of making one in love with goodness! But you must not take the whole merit of this plan to yourself. I am flattered to find that the same idea occurred to us both at the same moment." He seemed charmed with this confession, and the frank manner in which it was made. Surely, Maria, tenderness and delicacy like his, merit some return? Yes; I will hope, that the power I already possess, of conferring *happiness* on this deserving lover, will increase,

crease, not diminish, when I have bestowed on him the still more endearing name of Husband.

Though regard to decency (my father being only two months dead) prevents Sir Charles from urging the subject of our marriage, I consider myself so much in the light of a Wife, that I make no scruple to be driven about by him in an elegant little phaeton, which he presented to my mother lately, thinking the air of the coach too confined for her. How endearing are such attentions! This constant intercourse of kindness, and the thousand proofs I daily discover, of his most delicate affection, not only confirm my esteem, and enliven my gratitude, to a man whose study is to promote my enjoyment, but render his company so necessary to it, that I really tire of the hours, which regard to decorum obliges him to pass at a distance from us. He generally calls about eleven, and spends an hour with me, before my mother is ready to take an airing. It was past twelve to-day before he arrived; and I could not help becoming extremely apprehensive on account of his delay. When I heard his foot on the stairs, an involuntary movement carried me to the door of the room, which I hastily opened, crying, "Thank Heaven you are come, Sir Charles! I was really unhappy on account of your absence!"

fence." "Ah, Julia! my sweetest, kindest love," cried he, clasping me to his bosom, "now, now I am blessed indeed! Now you can sympathize in the secret emotions of my soul, when you are unhappy at my absence, and rejoice at my return. O, my Julia! may it ever be thus! May my presence ever enliven with joy these eyes; and may that tongue often bless me with this sweet confession!"

My mother joined us, but complained of such extreme languor that she said she would only go a very little way in the phaeton; and Sir Charles might then return, and carry me out a longer airing.

I was struck with this proposal of my mother's, as she never before had gone abroad without me. I suspended my curiosity, however, till Sir Charles brought her home, which he did in less than an hour.

They both looked very serious. My mother complained of being much exhausted, and said, she would try to get a little sleep, in order to be able to enjoy our society at dinner, when she hoped for Sir Charles's company. "I leave it to you, Sir," said she, "to acquaint Julia with my wishes, and to enforce the duty of complying with them. She *has* never yet disputed my commands, *and if she does so on this occasion, I shall* lay

lay the blame on my negotiator, and recall the powers with which I have invested him." This she said with a smiling air, which but ill corresponded with the expression of her ghastly countenance. The moment we got into the carriage, I eagerly demanded from Sir Charles, an explanation of my mother's speech.

"I need hardly assure my dearest Julia," said he, "that her words convey the language of my fondest wishes. She intreats, that you will consent to give me your hand, before we set out for Bristol."

—"How, Sir Charles!" interrupted I, "consent to marry before my father is three months dead? Surely my mother could not seriously make such a proposal: —what could possibly suggest such an idea?" "My love! my Julia!" said he, with a solemn and affecting tone, "this is no time for those idle forms, which your superior mind can overlook on proper occasions. You must now exert your utmost resolution, and shew me, that your fortitude is equal to your sensibility. I will not disguise with you: your mother is certainly in very great danger. "Heaven may a while prolong my life," said she this morning; "but I feel it is impossible I can recover. I have but one wish unfulfilled; that of bestowing Julia upon you, and leaving her under the protection

tection of a husband, who, I know, will find his whole felicity in promoting that of my deserving child."

I was so greatly affected with this conversation, that I begged Sir Charles to carry me home directly, and almost repented having left my dear mother, every moment of whose company seemed now unspeakably precious. Sir Charles left me at the gate, and returned home to dress. I stole softly up to my mother's apartment, whom I found awake, and greatly recruited with a soft sleep she had enjoyed during our absence. I approached her bed; and, taking hold of her hand, attempted to speak, but burst into a flood of tears.

She stretched out her feeble arms to embrace me. "My Julia! my beloved child," said she, "restrain the violence of your sorrow, which pains the heart of your mother. You have long seen me struggling with distress, to which my mind, I humbly hope, was submissive, but which was too violent for a frame like mine, long to sustain. Misled, at an early age, by a blind partiality, I bestowed the affections of a tender, ingenuous heart, on one incapable of knowing their value. Those afflictions which descend from the hand of Heaven, and whose tendency is, by softening, to mend the heart,

heart, are to be regarded as blessings. By instructing us in our own weakness, they render us humble in ourselves, and compassionate to the frailties of others. But those which are the offspring of our own folly and presumption, overwhelm us with self-reproach, and plunge us in despondency. After being so far advanced in the toilsome journey of life, should you weep, my Julia, that I am now come in view of my quiet rest? Would you wish longer to detain me in a world, which has been embittered to me by peculiar sorrow; where reflection must for ever prove an enemy to my enjoyment; and where I can only look forward to the accumulated pains of sickness, sorrow and a premature old age, their constant concomitant?—No, my generous, my dutious child! rather unite your thanks with mine, to that pitying God, who, in compassion to my weakness, is abridging my trial, and will bestow on me that reward in his mercy, which I could never claim from his justice." Oh, Maria! need I tell you how my heart bled at every word uttered by this patient suffering saint! After pausing a few minutes to recover her spirits—"And now, my Julia," said she, "let me enforce the request I sent you by Sir Charles."

“ Think of the situation in which you would find yourself, should Heaven call me suddenly away. Respect for a mother you fondly love, would then unite with decency, to delay your marriage for some months: and, during that period, you would be exposed to the strictures of an illiberal world;—perhaps to the insults of the most licentious, the most daring of mankind. Living alone, without fortune, without a relation to protect you.—I shudder at the bare idea. Comply then, my beloved child, with mine, and the wishes of the most deserving, the most respectable of men. I shall then leave the world in perfect peace.” I took hold of my dear mother’s hand, which I kissed with my tears; but almost suffocated with the violence of my emotions, I could only say, “ I am ready to obey you.”

She again embraced me, and, assuming a more cheerful air, “ Go, my love,” said she, “ collect your scattered spirits, and shew Sir Charles, that this act is your own, and not a constrained compliance with the request of a mother, whom you know to be incapable of imposing either severe or unreasonable commands.”

I retired, to give a loose to the affliction that overwhelmed me. Though I *had* seen, with anguish, the declining state of my mother’s health, I had never brought

brought myself to consider her death as in immediate prospect. We naturally fly from what is painful ; and what can be more so, than the thought of a last separation from those we tenderly love ? To part from her at the very time when most I required her private counsel ; to engage in the cares of a family, the important duties of a wife ; to enter into a world whose dangers I had learned to fear, but not to shun ; all these prospects sunk me into such a hopeless state of dejection, that I was totally absorbed in these gloomy ideas, when I heard some one tap softly at the door. Supposing it to be Sally, I covered my face with my handkerchief, and desired her to come in ; not hearing her speak, I raised my eyes, and beheld Sir Charles, who stood motionless, on seeing my extreme distress.

He had been below for a considerable time with my mother ; and growing anxious on account of my long absence, obtained her permission to come up, and fetch me.

His unexpected appearance, redoubled my emotions. He approached me with a look of the most melting compassion, mixed with a certain air of anxiety, that exceedingly affected me. " Is it possible, dearest Miss Greville," said he, " that a *prospect*, though melancholy in the high-
est

est degree, yet so long familiar to your thoughts, can thus unhinge all the powers of your soul?" I attempted to speak, but burst into an agony of grief. He gazed on me for some moments in silence; then, after a deep sigh, fixing his eyes earnestly on my face, "Julia!" cried he, "is it possible that you have deceived yourself, in the delightful confession you so lately made me? Is it possible that you love me not!—that you wish not to make me happy?—that you repent?" "Ah! do not wound me with these unkind suspicions," interrupted I. "I do wish to make you happy—I do love—but I fear—I greatly fear I am unworthy of yours."

"Most amiable, most ingenuous of women," cried Sir Charles, "banish those fears which have their foundation only in the present depressed state of your mind. O Julia! why should you fear? You cannot be unjust to an affection like mine; you cannot repay with indifference the tenderness of a man, who seeks your happiness more than life; whose whole life shall be spent in promoting it. Banish then those fears, dearest Julia, so injurious to both. Say, you will be mine; Oh! say so, with that gentle, that affectionate heart; and make me the most blessed of all the human race."

I rose;

I rose; and giving him my hand, "I will be yours, Sir Charles," said I, "yours with my whole heart, yours for ever."

I need not tell my friend with what transport he received this declaration. He seated himself by me; and after having soothed me into a kind of melancholy tranquility, we returned to my mother; who, during our short meal, exerted a degree of cheerfulness highly pleasing, yet deeply affecting. I was obliged to retire immediately after dinner, to give vent to the tears which forced themselves a passage, as often as I looked at my dear mother's pale emaciated countenance.

During my absence, Sir Charles told my mother, that though her confidence in his honour might prevent her from thinking of settlements at present, he wished to consult her with regard to these matters, and would leave a sketch of his affairs, and what he proposed with respect to my jointure, of which he begged to have her opinion without delay. After this, he entreated her to join with him, in persuading me to consent to our marriage, as soon as a special licence could be obtained, which he hoped might be in the course of three days. "Gracious Heaven! are three days, then, all the time allowed me to dry up those bitter

tears,

tears, that have flowed so long without restraint; whose source still remains in my wounded bosom, and which I fear will never be forbidden to flow? In three short days must I erase every impression which love and grief have engraven on my inmost heart?" "Ah, Maria! will it then be criminal to think of him, who has so long engrossed all my thoughts? Must I even forbear to accuse—to blame—to pity him, lest compassion should revive that love to which it is allied!

Eternal Power! direct and guide me! Pity my weakness—confirm my resolution—restore my peace—and teach me—Oh teach me to forget!—The dye is cast, Maria! Your Julia is the wife of Sir Charles Mortimer, and with respect to me, the name of Rivers is no more!

The messenger returned with the licence, twelve hours sooner than was expected, and arrived yesterday with the packet, just as we were sitting down to dinner. My conscious heart took alarm the moment it was delivered. I turned pale, trembled, and grew so sick, that Sir Charles was forced to bring me water, to prevent me from fainting. "One would think, Julia," said my mother gaily, "that this was a death-warrant, rather than a licence, which Sir Charles has received. Are you already seized with remorse, on account of the fetters in which you

you are going to bind him?" So far from it, Madam," interrupted he, "I suspect Miss Greville is only studying how to render them more secure. But indeed she may spare herself any concern on that score. A little blind Urchin has contrived to rivet them so fast, that I am certain I shall never be able to shake them off." "I hope, Sir Charles," said I "they will fit so easy, that you will never wish to do so."

In this manner we passed the afternoon, much more cheerfully than I could have imagined possible. In the evening, whilst my mother retired to rest, Sir Charles requested me to take a walk with him, and give him my opinion of some improvements he had lately planned. With a delicacy peculiarly his own, he diverted my mind from the gloomy subjects on which it had dwelt during the former part of the day ; communicated a thousand pleasing schemes in regard to our future œconomy, asked my advice about several matters that he knew were interesting to me, and, by the most refined art, led my thoughts into the only channel which at that time could yield me pleasure, that of contriving means of conferring happiness on all around me.

The soothing tenderness, and perfect *ease of his manner*, banished restraint, and

and even dejection, from mine. We spent the evening together with much satisfaction; and it was agreed, before we parted, that we should be married next day; after which, he should bid adieu to the Grove, and become my mother's guest. Accordingly, at ten this morning, the sacred knot was tied, in presence only of my mother, my faithful Sally, and an old servant of Sir Charles's, who has been with him from a child. When the ceremony was ended, this affectionate creature came up, and kneeling whilst he kissed his master's hand, Sir Charles presented him with mine. "May God Almighty himself prosper and bless you both," said he. "Sure I am, if your Lady be as good as she is handsome, you will be the happiest couple in Christendom. Your blessed mother looked just so thirty years ago, and would have rejoiced to see this day: but, Heaven's will be done." I thanked the good old man for his kind wishes. "I fear, James," said I, "I shall never fill the place of Lady Mortimer: but I shall always be glad to have the advice of such faithful and zealous friends of the family, as you are." The worthy creature retired with tears of gratitude in his eyes, blessing me for my condescension. Sir Charles seemed perfectly delighted with what he termed my goodness to his old Guardian;

Guardian ; for such he had actually proved himself.

Retired to solitude and reflection, let me breathe a little, Maria, from the agitating scenes of this day. Let me consider seriously of the step I have taken.—Ah, Maria ! why should I now consider of it ? Is not my fate irrevocably fixed ? Rather let me strengthen my feeble mind, by repeating a thousand times the motives that have determined my conduct. Rather let me appeal to that great invisible Witness, who beholds the sighs of frail nature with compassion, and records in heaven as virtue, every desire to become virtuous. Rather let me beseech Him, to whose unerring wisdom my will is submissive, to direct the future tenor of my life ; and, in the discharge of my duty, to conduct me to peace and happiness.

Join in this humble earnest prayer, Maria, with your own,

Your ever affectionate Friend,

—My mother is retired to rest, and Sir Charles to write letters. I dare not trust myself with my own thoughts, and therefore take up my pen to address you. For the last time ?—Yes, Maria ; the last time, let it trace the name of Rivers.

Whatever may be his lot, exposed as he is at present to peculiar danger—wherever fate may conduct him ;—whatever intelligence

intelligence you may receive concerning him;—henceforth, Maria, let me never, never hear the name of Rivers more.

Farewell, my best, my dearest friend. Would to heaven you were here, to conceal in your pitying bosom, the tears which force their way, in spite of my utmost endeavours to suppress them! the various distracting fears that oppress my soul! Oh, Maria! there is a gloom hangs over my mind, that suits not with the name of Bride. Surely there is something in my nature, repugnant to joy!—I hear Sir Charles's voice in the parlour. I will drive these dismal presages from my heart. I will strive to meet him with that cheerful complacency, which is due to the boundless tenderness of his. Adieu, adieu.



LETTER LXIII.

Miss Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

I PRESUME not, dearest Julia, in the present state of your mind, to wish you that joy which is rarely, and never long, the lot of mortals: but, with my whole heart, I join in your pious, your reasonable prayer, that in the discharge of your duty,
you

you may taste unfeigned happiness and peace.

Doubt not, my amiable friend, that this will indeed be your lot. Doubt not, that every ingenuous feeling of your soul will be awakened, by the unremitting tenderness of the most deserving of men; and that your sincere desire to render him happy, will be attended with all that success it merits. The aid of Heaven is never wanting to us, if we are not wanting to ourselves.

Amidst a scene, at all times foreign to my taste, and now peculiarly irksome, you, my Julia, occupy all my thoughts. I tremble to think of your valuable mother's situation, and of what you must suffer, should the event be what we dread.

To watch the death-bed of a friend, is the most painful post of observation to which we can be called. Let me conjure you, not to yield to the first impulse of your affectionate heart, which I know will lead you to watch by your mother during the night. A sick nurse is the most proper person for this office. But if once you take it upon yourself, your poor mother, like every invalid, will soon find, that no one can be of use to her, except the person she most loves.

I know by experience, how painful it is, to tear one's self from the bed of languishing,

ing, when conscious that our presence there can alleviate distress. But, in this state of discipline, principle must often take place of feeling; and on no occasion ought it sooner to do so, than that in question; since by constant exertion, we may not only unfit ourselves for duty, but add to all the sufferings of our friend, the anguish of self-reproach.

It is natural to feel exquisite sorrow, at the prospect of such a loss as that with which you are threatened. But, ah! my friend, with what caution ought we to indulge a wish for aught connected with this ever-shifting scene! Utterly ignorant of what is best for us, or what would constitute our greatest possible happiness, let us neither sink under the prospect of apprehended misfortunes, nor eagerly covet imagined blessings, but cast all our cares on that Being, who alone can ordain good, or avert evil; give us the proper enjoyment of the one, and inspire us with strength to support the other.

Assure Sir Charles of my highest esteem, and very best wishes; and from the friendship that glows in your own faithful breast, judge of that by which you are for ever united to the heart of

Your

MARIA HERBERT.

LETTER

LETTER LXIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

I HAVE often wondered, Maria, why the heart should continue to sigh, after conscience and reason have given the clearest decision in favour of any particular action. We are told, "that the triumph of the wicked is short." Ah, my dear friend! is not the triumph of the virtuous, too, too often so? Yet let us not vilify the sacred name of virtue: Though her triumph does not always last, it is ever succeeded by that quiet consciousness, that self-approbation, which better befits our nature, and which inward rectitude alone can inspire.

Do not chide me, if I confess, that I have often caught myself, during the last fortnight, repeating, with a sigh, this pathetic sentence of the admirable Madam Riccoboni: "I am astonished at the step I have taken. I tell myself every moment that I have acted rightly; I tell myself so, but I do not feel it. I seek for reasons to applaud my own conduct; I find them, but it is in my duty alone. Alas! how feeble is the consolation the heart derives from such reflections!"

My

My spirits for some days have been uncommonly depressed. I greatly fear, Maria, lest the Mistress, whom Sir Charles's imagination has exalted so far above the rest of her sex, should fall, in his esteem, below the level of the weakest, when he discovers those imperfections, which time will unfold in her character.

I fear he may not be able to make allowance for those little peevish or petulant humours, from which few women are entirely exempt, whilst engrossed by domestic duties, or ruffled by domestic cares. Ah ! should he not be disposed to pity those weaknesses he never felt, how suddenly might all our hopes be blasted, and our dreams of happiness vanish !

Much affection, prudence, and delicacy, are requisite, Maria, to support with dignity the character of a Wife. In all other connections, it is sufficient, perhaps, to enter so far into the feelings of others, as to share in their joys and sorrows ; but so tender, so lively ought that sympathy to be, which is the soul of wedded love, that we ought to make every sentiment of a husband's our own ; catch the prevailing tone of his mind ; and not only meet him at all times with complacency, but even check our officious zeal to please, *when* silence seems more conformable to *his* humour. We should constrain, on

such

such occasions, our overflowing affection, to wear the calmer, quieter semblance of friendship.

I was extremely shocked lately, by the behaviour of a couple, who made, some years ago, what is called a love-marriage; who are esteemed people of worth by the world, but, by giving way to passion and humour, have lost for each other all respect and complaisance, and, by their contemptuous manner, stern looks, and harsh expressions, plant daggers in each others bosoms.

Maria! is it possible—is it really possible, that two people, who once tenderly and truly loved, can, in the course of a few fleeting years, become so entirely indifferent to each others happiness; so lost to all sense of delicacy and propriety, as to shew, not only coldness, but contempt for each other, in the presence too of strangers? I trust it is impossible. They have doubtless mistaken, for that generous, that endearing affection, some sudden gust of inclination, which a moment dissipates;—the dreams of youthful fancy, or the pictures of wild imagination. I trust and believe, that, on no occasion whatever, Sir Charles or I could thus wound the pride and delicacy of each others affection. Conscious of our own imperfections, I hope
we

we shall ever be ready to make allowance for those frailties that are natural, and those errors that are involuntary.

Whether the many interesting, and often agitating conversations my dear mother has lately had with us, have affected her health, I know not; but every hour the lamp of life, which has long burned dimly, waxes more and more feeble. In every moment of ease, she expresses her perfect approbation of my conduct; enumerates the virtues of Sir Charles; and assures me, that she will now quit the world, not only with resignation, but comfort, since she leaves me under the protection of so estimable a husband.

If any thing could sooth or comfort me, in the prospect of such a loss, it would be the heart-felt sympathy, and endearing attentions of Sir Charles. He watches by the bed of my dying parent; he procures her every relief of which her present situation can admit; he gently wipes away the tears which swell into my eyes, as often as I behold the affecting spectacle of my dear mother supported in his arms, and receiving every cordial from his hand; and pressing me to his bosom, whilst I hang over the two most dear to my heart, he assures my loved parent, that the peace, the happiness of her darling child, shall be his unceasing care.

Oh

Oh, Maria ! there is a tender pleasure mingles with these solemn scenes, that almost teaches me to forget their bitterness.

In continuation :

It is over, my dear Maria ! The painful struggle is over, and my blessed parent sleeps in peace. I would give you the melancholy particulars, but the kindest, best of men, insists on my laying down my pen. Ah ! how ungrateful were I, could I dispute any commands of his !



LETTER LXV.

Miss Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

THIS moment the melancholy, though expected tidings of your mother's death, have reached me. O why am I not near to offer you the only consolation of which grief like yours, at once reasonable and extreme, can admit ? The consolation of silent sympathy, and mingling tears !

Amidst your natural, your pious sorrow, for the loss of so inestimable a friend, let me remind my Julia, that, at her advanced years, protracted life is often but

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protracted

protracted sorrow: that though one source of comfort is withdrawn, innumerable yet remain. After having long possessed many valuable blessings, shall we repine, when restoring one to him from whom we have received all? Did we truly love God, we would not receive his correction with repugnance: for when we love, we enter into the sentiments of the beloved object, approve whatever he does, and receive his reproofs without repining.

A principal source of our impatience under our sufferings, is that inexcusable ingratitude, by which we feel much more sensibly those chastisements with which we are sometimes visited, than those blessings which are continually poured upon our heads.

The grief occasioned by the former, stifles that joy and satisfaction which the possession of the latter ought to supply. This ingratitude is the more unpardonable, that we deserve the chastisements, but are wholly unworthy of the blessings.

These general observations, however, are by no means applicable to my ingenuous friend. She is abundantly disposed to view, with becoming thankfulness, every blessing in her lot. May they daily increase; and whilst time shall add to their number and value, may it gently steal away every grief that oppresses, and
care

care that disquiets her heart! So prays fervently

Her unalterable friend,

MARIA HERBERT.



LETTER LXVI.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

FOR some days past, Maria, I have been too much indisposed to think of writing. Sir Charles having gone abroad on particular business, I resume my pen, to indulge the tender sorrows of my heart, by repeating to you the last affecting interview with my dear departed mother.

The first week after our marriage, she became so weak, that we hardly ever left her. One evening, having observed some very alarming symptoms, we were resolved to sit by her during the night. She insisted, however, so earnestly on our retiring to our own apartment, that we did so, but had hardly left her, when Sally came hastily into my closet, and bursting into tears, told me, that my mother was in a fit. I flew to her bedside, and found her just recovering from it.

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“ Do

on hearing from me as soon as we are settled. Adieu, dearest, best of friends. I am yours in sincerity,

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER LXVII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr. Belford.

Bristol Hot Wells.

I THANK my dear friend for entering so warmly into all my concerns, and for sharing in my present felicity, in a manner that cannot fail to endear it. You say justly, it was not in the gay world I was to expect a companion suited to my taste; and I must think myself highly favoured of Heaven, in being directed to the only object capable of engaging my whole heart, and rendering me completely happy.

Oh Belford! I am indeed happy; happy beyond my most sanguine expectation, and far beyond my desert. My lovely wife is all that is sweet and engaging in the softer sex, and at the same time possesses an understanding that would do honour to the most distinguished of ours. I admire her superior talents; but I revere, almost adore that charming modesty and

and ingenuity, which exalts her, in my opinion, far above all the women I have ever known.

The blind adoration of the lover, and the assumed charms of the mistress, too often vanish at the same instant. For the husband of Julia it has been reserved, to discover ten thousand real beauties, and graceful attractions, which, by never being displayed before marriage, acquire a double value in the eyes of him, for whom alone they were reserved. How little do women consult their own interest, or discover their knowledge of the characters of men, who think, by indiscriminately lavishing their attentions on all, that they will at least attach one to themselves. Favours that are common, become no favours at all; and a man of the least delicacy must disclaim all interest in a heart, which is hackneyed in the arts of allurement, ready to admit every pretender, and entirely ignorant of those secret, those delightful transports, that attend our first impressions of that passion, which, through life, makes the chief happiness or misery of feeling and elegant minds.

It seems determined by Heaven, "that those who greatly love, must greatly fear." My present felicity suffers no small abatement, from the extreme delicacy of my *Julia's* health, which has undergone a most

severe shock, by her mother's death, and the various melancholy events of the last three months.

Her paleness and languor, whilst they awaken my fears, excite, at the same time, a pity, a melting softness, which I cannot express; which binds her more closely than ever to my soul, and gives occasion for those undisguised expressions of my fondness, that both her own delicacy and mine would have restrained, had she been blessed with a more confirmed state of health. Far from being displeased with my solicitude and attentions, she receives them with a complacency the most endearing; and expresses a sense of their value, and of my kindness, in terms suited to her own ingenuous heart, but sometimes painful to mine.

I have brought her to this place, in hopes that she may receive benefit, both from the use of the waters, and change of objects. From the last she will, I fear, derive less advantage than I could wish; as she declines mixing with company, and often tells me, that though she would not impose the least restraint on me, she never wishes for any other society than that of her husband. I need not tell you, that hers is dearer to me than that of the whole world.

I amuse

I amuse myself with a thousand agreeable schemes for next winter, when I propose bringing Julia to town, provided you will meet us there, and be her Cecisbeo for a few months; after which, we will return to Harwood, when I hope to make you a complete convert to my plan of enjoyment: an amiable companion, an active life, and a country situation. Mean time, may your present laudable pursuit of elegant and useful knowledge, be successful; as it will add to your enjoyment of the future, in whatever circumstances that may find you. Adieu.

CHARLES MORTIMER.



LETTER LXVIII.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Mrs. Helen Maria Startley.

London.

YOU reproach me, dear aunt, with unkindness, and accuse me of indolence, because I have not given you a distinct account of all the places of public resort. Believe me, their quick succession leaves me at no leisure, either to impress what I hear and see distinctly on my memory, or to transmit an account of them to you.

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I do

I do not recollect having mentioned to you the lively pleasure I felt, the first time I visited Kensington Garden. It is indeed a princely one, and you can at once enjoy there, the quiet of retirement, and the enlivening influence of society. If you quit that walk to which the company resort, and retire to the opposite side, you may imagine yourself a hundred miles from London; sit under the shade of high trees, and listen, without interruption, to the bleating of sheep, and the singing of birds.

This species of music, however, is more suited to Maria's taste than mine: After having indulged her with a solitary walk there this morning, I prevailed on her to join our party in the evening to Bach's and Abel's concert; where, if she would be ingenuous, I dare say she would confess she was a thousand times better entertained.

I have often feared, that when the spirits of just men and women became perfectly perfect, paradise would become extremely dull for want of variety; but I am now convinced of my error. On this occasion, though perfect harmony was the result of the whole, each musician played a different part: separate, each was delightful; united, all was harmonious.

I went yesterday to view St. Paul's, the magnificence of which is greatly obscured

scured by the surrounding buildings. We ascended to the top of it by a stair, which you would not have climbed to have been placed in the papal chair. How shall I describe to you the richness and extent of the prospect? Do not think me profane, if I confess, I was strongly tempted to believe myself on the pinnacle of the temple, when, looking about, I found at my elbow,—not the devil indeed, but a figure very like one of his emissaries, who, with his own, and the help of his wife's eyes, was eagerly employed in overlooking all the wondrous scene, in order to try and discover—Our house at Shore-ditch!

O blessed self importance! what a cordial dost thou administer to the human heart! Truly mine is indebted to thee for some of its kindest sweetest movements, and therefore I will never seek to banish thee thence.

When I looked down from the curious whispering gallery, on the little atoms who were moving below in the shape of men, I was disposed to aver, with the psalmist, "that they were less than nothing, and vanity." But when I reflected, that the stupendous fabric I had then in view, was the work of such feeble hands as theirs, I could hardly forbear exclaiming with him on another occasion,

casion, "Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels!"

I believe, my dear aunt, the truth lies, as commonly, between the two extremes.

From a desert, such as London now is, you can expect no news, but such as relates to myself, since, except a few relations, (and these we do not always rank in the list of interesting objects,) I might as well traverse the wilds of Abyssinia as the Park, for a subject.

Our plans have been sadly deranged this week, by one of the horses falling lame. My good father, with the skill of a philosopher, and the confidence of a Christian, purchased one yesterday, from a celebrated jockey; but, on putting him into the carriage, Will perceived at one glance, that he was blind of both eyes. Bating this misfortune, he seems a beast of considerable merit, and uses all his legs at once, which his predecessor only did occasionally. I ventured to rally my father on his skill in horse-flesh; but I found it was too delicate a point to be touched upon. We are never so ready to commit two errors, as when we have committed one. Not being able to submit to have our judgment called in question, we first become peevish, then perverse, and obstinately defend our own conduct,

conduct, at the expence of forfeiting the good opinion of others.

Tell me, my dear aunt, how you contrive to support the uniform tenor of a country-life. But you are possessed of such a share, both of religion and philosophy, as preserves you from feeling a thousand little rubs, which disturb and vex other mortals. Would you could send me a portion of each ! for, in this whirl of folly and dissipation, I have much need of a large addition to my original stock. I require none to that sincere affection, with which I am

Your dutiful and grateful niece,

LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER LXVIII.

Mrs. Helen Maria Stanley to Miss Lucy Herbert.

Stanley Farm.

NOTWITHSTANDING the hurry and bustle of public life, your present situation, my dear Lucy, will afford much room for observation and improvement. You will be more sensible of the characteristical distinctions of mankind, in the metropolis,

tropolis, than among the peasantry in the villages; where great uniformity of character and manners must necessarily prevail.

With people of solid understandings, mixing with the world tends to enlarge and improve the mind; to teach us to allow for different modes of education, different constitutions, circumstances, and examples; and, without sacrificing morality to manners, leads us, on proper occasions, to relax the severity of our virtue, and pardon in others, what we would deem highly culpable in ourselves. There, however, a truly benevolent mind will study to avoid every error that may have an influence on the manners of society. No person, however obscure, is without a little circle, of which he is the centre, and which relies on him for example and direction.

I am happy to find, that advancing years have served to increase my relish for the quiet of retirement, and that refined and inexplicable joy, which arises in the soul, from the contemplation of the beauties of nature.

To her sincere votaries, Nature herself seems animated with a divine spirit, which corresponds with the sentiments of ours; or rather with which ours unites in sweetest sympathy. I never saw the sun

sun rise, without being conscious of an elevation of mind, which excited a wish, emulative of the usefulness, activity, and benignity of that glorious luminary ; nor watched his setting rays, without dissolving in tender recollection, of some dear departed friend, whose beautiful, but transient course, had left the world dark and sorrowful ; to bewail that dismal night to which no morning succeeds ; that departure which knows no return !

When I ascend a lofty mountain, and survey a boundless prospect, I thus address my Maker, " What is man that thou art mindful of him ?" Then reflecting on his important station in the universe, and on the peculiar marks of divine favour by which he has been distinguished, I revere myself as the offspring of God ; I abhor what is evil ; I aspire after whatever is noble, great, and good.

When I repose on the verdant earth, and mark the toil of the emmet, or listen to the song of the grasshopper, I exult in the assurance, that the meanest of all the works of the Creator, is not overlooked in his providence ; but that even the most weak and dependent, are the objects of his complacency, the subjects of his care : and above all, that the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, not only condescends to behold with favour, the blessed

blessed and the perfect in heaven, but the pious and the penitent on earth.

When I mark the smooth surface of a river, I reflect on the illusive and treacherous stream of time, which, though in appearance ever present, ever the same, is changing every moment, and bearing us along in its rapid, though silent course. The falling leaves too, that float on its surface, remind me of the various fates of the human race. Some dance lightly along the silver wave; some are rudely obstructed in their course by rocks and shelves; whilst others are suddenly hurried down the stream, overwhelmed by the tide, or engulfed in the whirlpool.

Thus, in the country, every object contributes either to my pleasure or improvement. As I never lose sight of yours, my Lucy, permit me to warn you of an error, into which I perceive you insensibly slide. I mean that of allowing yourself in the use of scripture-phrases, on ludicrous occasions; and, for the sake of being smart, making witty allusions to the Bible.

My dear girl, every thing connected with the sacred writings ought to be carefully avoided on these occasions; the more so, that temptations to transgress in this way very frequently occur; and that *nothing* tends more to wear off that reverence

verence due to religion, than this unbecoming freedom with its laws, ministers, or institutions. I know my Lucy too well, to doubt that a hint will suffice on this subject.

But it is time to have done with this sermon. Adieu then, my dear Lucy. Study every day to correct some wayward propensity, and to acquire some mental accomplishment. You will find your toils rewarded before the close of the year. Remember that evil habits become every day worse to conquer, and good ones more difficult to be acquired. May every year bring you an increase of knowledge and virtue, the only treasures the truly wise will covet.

Your affectionate Aunt,
HELEN MARIA STANLEY.

LETTER LXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol Hot Wells.

THERE is no obligation I find more pleasure in fulfilling, than that of writing to my friend. We had a very agreeable journey, and are fixed in quiet lodgings with a private family, much to my satisfaction.

faction. I may say, in the language of Rousseau, " My time this week has passed very smoothly. I have been grave, but not melancholy ; peaceful, but not indolent ; pensive, yet contented." I think I should be perfectly so, could I be secure of rendering happy the husband, who tenderly, truly loves me.

After all, Maria, is it not strange, that so many of our sex should wish to form new connections, and plunge into additional cares and anxieties, in a world where distress is so inevitable ? Nothing can account for this, but the over-ruling providence of that Being who formed and placed us here, and who renders our instincts (forgive me, O Philosophy !) more powerful than our reason.

Sir Charles has given orders for several reparations at Harwood, so I fancy we shall continue here during — — —

— Powerful Heaven, Maria ! how strange is my destiny ! Scarce can my trembling hand guide my pen, or convey to you the present tumultuous emotions of my heart — Did I not say, the name of Rivers was no more ! — Ah ! it is revived ; I fear for the utter destruction of my peace.

Whilst I was dressing for dinner, some one tapped at my door. It was Sir Charles. I desired him to come in. " I have

have just met most unexpectedly," said he, "with my old schoolfellow and favourite Lord Rivers, whom I have brought to take part of our family-dinner."

Seeing me look surprized, as I knew his Lordship was in London when we left Harwood: "I have heard, Julia," continued he, "that this was a privilege some husbands durst not venture to take with impunity: but my love will never be found, either in her person or table in such a dishabille, as would make the presence of a friend unwelcome." "I hope, Sir Charles," replied I, "the presence of my best friend will always be a sufficient motive for endeavouring to set off both to the most advantage." He thanked me in the warmest manner for my complaisance; and my dress being properly adjusted, led me into the parlour, where I beheld,—O Maria! not Lord Rivers, whom I had never seen, but the well-known, long, too long remembered features of his brother.

My astonishment and confusion so entirely over-powered me, that I stood motionless as a statue. He approached, saluted me, and said something, I know not what, in the usual form of giving joy, but trembled whilst he pronounced the word happiness.

Fortunately

Fortunately Sir Charles took no notice at the time of our embarrassment ; but attributing mine, as he afterwards told me, to this being my first appearance as a Wife, rallied me on my silent and awkward deportment, under my new character.

Supposing us absolute strangers, he politely took the burden of the conversation upon himself. He asked his friend a thousand questions with regard to America, his health, his voyage, &c. ; to all which he gave only short and confused answers. His dejection increased every moment, and he seemed often so perplexed and embarrassed, that I could not help pitying his confusion, tho' I thought I ought to have triumphed in it. As soon as decency would permit, he arose from table, and muttering something about a prior engagement, hastily took his leave. The moment he was gone, Sir Charles asked me, whether I had ever seen Lord Rivers before ? " I frequently observed him," continued he, " fix his eyes on you, with such a mixture of sorrow and admiration as really surprised me. A title and fortune do not usually affect a young man with melancholy, but his former gaiety seems quite gone." It was well for me that the length of this speech left me some moments to recover from the

the confusion into which I was thrown by the first part of it. "I never saw this gentleman since he became Lord Rivers," replied I; "pray when did he succeed to the title?"

"His elder brother died about three weeks ago," answered he, "by a fever, the consequence of a fox-chace, and subsequent debauch. Mr. Rivers having received a wound in his breast at the siege of Charlestown, fell into bad health, and was advised to make trial of the Bristol waters. It is with this view he arrived this morning. We met at the coffee-room; and after giving me these particulars, I told him, that I too had been engaged in a siege, though not so tedious as that of Troy; that I thought myself the happiest of mortals, though I had forfeited my liberty; and that if he would go home with me, I would immediately introduce him to my lovely Helen. I really fear," continued Sir Charles gravely, "that poor Rivers must be much worse than he will acknowledge; for I never saw a man so entirely changed."

I need not attempt putting in language the anguish of my soul during this discourse. Happily the tears that flow for a deceased parent, conceal the pangs occasioned by a faithless lover.—Maria! had he come home healthy, happy, gay, elate

elate with his good fortune, I could 'have' felt for him the contempt due to a conduct like his. But to behold him sick, languishing, dejected—perhaps still loving,—Oh, Maria ! let me—let me fly from that thought ! there is distraction in it.

Pity my weakness, my tender, my compassionate friend. I know you will. Would to Heaven, you could teach me to abjure it ! Would you could reconcile me to myself, and restore, to this wounded bosom, that peace which I fear is fled, never more to return ! Adieu.

Your afflicted

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER LXX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol Hot Wells.

MY uneasiness increases daily. I am exposed here to continual alarms ; and my apprehension, lest Sir Charles should remark the singularity of my behaviour, gives me such an air of timidity and embarrassment, whenever the name of Rivers is mentioned, that I really do not *think* it can long escape his observation ; especially

especially as I can never move abroad, without hazard of meeting him, whom of all the human race I wish to shun. Ah, my friend! that I should dread, to behold that face, which I have so often contemplated with pleasure! that I should tremble at the sound of that voice, which used to calm every inquietude! Cruel, ungrateful, unpitying Rivers! May it thou for ever remain a stranger to the anguish thou hast inflicted!

Gracious Heaven! what will become of me?—Read—O read, Maria! and tell me what am I to do?—Alas! you are far from me. My mother—my dear instructress is no more! I have no one to pity—none to advise me!—Maria, I will not see Rivers—I will leave Bristol this very night.—May Heaven direct me! for I am almost distracted with my apprehensions.

Lord Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

MY astonishment, on seeing Miss Gre-ville the wife of Sir Charles Mortimer, could only be equalled by the misery it has occasioned me. Abandoned by my last feeble hope, life is become an intolerable burden. Before bidding you an eter-nal adieu, permit me, Madam, in justice to our former friendship, to converse with you

you a few minutes without witnesses I have much to enquire, much to communicate—Yet, alas! it is now too late. Are you not—O misery! are you not the Wife of another?

Powerful Heaven! dost thou permit such impious violation of vows made in thy awful presence!—Where then is thy justice?

—Fear not, unkind Julia, that I shall ever reproach you. No: your own mind will better perform that office, when it is no longer in your power to atone for your injustice: Declining health, and an adverse climate, joined to unceasing affliction, will soon rid you of every pang connected with the presence of the much injured, unhappy, yet,—ah, Julia! still adoring

RIVERS.

Maria! since transcribing this letter, I am become more calm. Is it not enough to have abused my confidence, despised my tenderness, abandoned me to sorrow? —must he add insult and reproach to eternal regret? Ah! let him reap the fruits of treachery and dishonour.—What would he enquire?—what can he communicate, that can obliterate the remembrance of the past?—and what is now the past to me?—Yes, I am the wife of Sir Charles Mortimer; the guardian of his honour and

my

my own ; and I will hold more valuable than life, the sacred deposit. Yes, my resolution is unalterable ; I will never consent to see Lord Rivers more. I cannot bring myself to write to him ; but surely my silence will sufficiently evince my displeasure.

Oh, Maria ! friend of my secret soul ! why are you not here to support me ? Where is the peace that accompanies virtue ? What, at this dreadful moment, is conscious rectitude to me ? My heart is torn by distracting passions. My feeble reason just serves to point out the horrid precipice on which I stand, but not to calm the tempest, or guide my feet to safety. Eternal Fountain of light and purity, vouchsafe to aid thy feeble creature, in this hour of danger and darkness ! Let that voice which outrageous elements obey, calm these tumultuous passions, and teach them to accord with my will ; which, in spite of the frailty of nature, thy mercy is inclining to what is good.

Upon second thoughts, Maria, I will write to Rivers. Not, however, to reproach him, but to prevent the possibility of his construing my silence into a consent to see him : that prospect now would be worse than death. I do not comprehend the meaning of his expressions ; but I shall be at no pains to weigh them.

His actions sufficiently develope his character. He is unworthy of my esteem. But I will not discover to him that pity which I cannot avoid feeling for him. Surely, Maria, his bad health, depressed spirits, and a mind so ill at ease as his letter bespeaks, deserve commiseration?

Lady Mortimer to Lord Rivers.

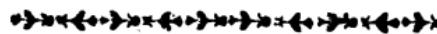
There was a time, my Lord, when certain explanations might have been desirable, and saved me much pain. That time is past ; and the retrospect of your own conduct, will sufficiently account for mine. I must therefore request, my Lord, that you will take no more trouble on this subject. To avoid the necessity of refusing your visits, and returning your letters, I take this opportunity of assuring your Lordship, that neither of them will for the future be received by

JULIA MORTIMER.

Ah, Maria ! what a stile is this ! how unlike that with which I used to address Rivers ! Though I am fixed in my resolutions, I fear I have been too harsh in expressing them. Heaven is my witness ! though I blame, despise, renounce—I would not hurt him. Too well do I know the wounds inflicted by the inven-
nomed

named shafts of reproach, to give to any human heart, a pang like those mine has lately experienced: too well do I know, that, from those we have once fondly loved, unkindness becomes doubly cruel, doubly afflicting.—Unkindness! how foreign to my nature! how far from my thoughts! Oh, Rivers! though thou hast wounded this bosom in the most tender part,—perhaps mortally;—never, ah, never can I be unkind to thee!—But this theme is unhealthful to my peace: let us quit it, Maria. Your gentle heart will pity weakness you never felt, when you reflect, that it is the consequence of misery, of which, I trust, you shall never be able to form an idea. Farewell, my most amiable friend.

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER LXXI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr. Belford.

Bristol Hot Wells.

WITH whatever reluctance, Belford, I make the mortifying confession, it is too true, that I begin at last to be convinced, that lasting happiness is unattainable on earth; and that the complaints so often

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repeated,

repeated, both by the divine and the moralist, concerning the imperfection of all sublunary enjoyments, are neither the peevish murmurs of disappointment, nor the gloomy presages of superstition, but the sober dictates of truth—the sad convictions of experience.

In my last I acquainted you with my apprehensions on account of my Julia's health. Would to Heaven I could say they were removed ! Alas ! every day increases them.

Besides the paleness and lassitude I formerly mentioned, her dejection of spirits is again returned ; and there is something in her whole manner—an absence—a restraint—a timidity, which I cannot put in language, and the cause of which I vainly endeavour to penetrate.

Heavens, Belford ! could I have believed it possible, that after obtaining the hand of Julia Greville, I should yet be unhappy ! If hope delayed makes the heart sick, hope entirely disappointed cannot fail to overwhelm it with anguish. Perhaps, with a constitution so extremely delicate, the mind may be proportionably affected, by the disorders of the bodily frame. I have a thousand apprehensions on her account, which it is impossible *always to repress*. When I question her *about her health*, she answers only by *tears* ;

tears ; and I am convinced she conceals her complaints, from the fear of distressing me. You may believe this conviction only adds tenderness to the compassion her uneasiness excites, and impatience to my anxious wishes for its removal.

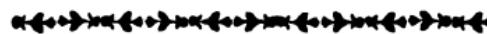
From whatever cause that uneasiness proceeds, it is altogether out of my power to relieve it, as she persists in denying that she is indisposed.

Her extreme pensiveness, and love of retirement, have sometimes led me to fear, that something hangs on her mind, which she does not chuse to communicate to me. On hinting this, and gently chiding her for her reserves, she blushed excessively, and told me with her usual sweetness, that I might be assured she would never conceal any thing from me, which was likely to give me pleasure.

I ought to entreat your pardon, for continually harrassing you with my distresses : but the comfort I derive from your sympathy, naturally impels me to seek it. I know not of what to complain, but I feel I am far from being happy. I tremble to discover my own uneasiness, lest I should augment that of my wife, with whom, for the first time, I am under the painful necessity of dissembling. —A little time, I trust, will remove this *irksome restraint*, and restore health to

my love, and peace to her anxious husband,

And your sincere friend,
CHARLES MORTIMER.



LETTER LXXII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol Hot Wells.

I have sent the letter, Maria. I could not alter the style of it, without danger of betraying to Rivers the distressed state of my own mind, or the too tender concern which I greatly fear I am still disposed to take in his. I have just been perusing his strange mysterious letter. Maria ! what can he mean by my injustice, —my violation of vows made in the presence of Heaven ? Ah ! has not his perfidy entirely cancelled them ? —But it is ever thus with those who offend. Alike unable to vindicate their proceedings, or support self-reproach, they add injustice to cruelty, and think to lessen the blame due to themselves, by throwing part of that blame on others. How mean, how disingenuous such a conduct !

In continuation :

Alarmed

Alarmed with the most cruel, most frightful suspicions, agitated with contending tumultuous passions, I must fly, my friend, from a place, where I tread on snares, where I am surrounded with dangers on every side. Maria ! I am tempted, at some moments of peculiar weakness, to think I have been too hasty ; to think there is a possibility that he—that Rivers may have been betrayed—may still be—Oh Heaven !—may still be innocent.—But no : my weak heart blinds my understanding ; it is—it is impossible.

At twelve this morning, when Sir Charles usually spends an hour at the coffee-room, I was sitting at work in the parlour, when the door opened, and Lord Rivers was announced. I rose to receive him, but was so overcome with terror and surprise, that my sight forsook me, and I staggered towards the window, against which I leaned for support. He threw himself into a chair near me. I trembled violently. After fixing his eyes steadfastly on me for some time, he clasped his hands in an agony together, and burst into tears. Never, never, Maria ! shall I forget that dreadful moment.—There was something terrifying in the violence of his emotion.

After a few minutes of profound silence, again raising his eyes to me with a look of the most piercing anguish—"I have supported your unkindness, your infidelity," said he, "but I cannot exist under the burden of your contempt.—Julia! what have I done to deserve it?—I came to demand from you an explanation of your mysterious, your cruel conduct.—I came, in spite of my former resolution, to load you with reproach.—But Oh, Heaven! what do I behold!—pale, feeble, dejected,—the image of despondent melancholy, instead of bridal joy! What am I to think?—I am alarmed—I am distracted. Eternal Power! should it be so? Ah, Julia!—too, too rash. I fear—I greatly fear, you have destroyed your own peace, whilst unjustly sacrificing mine."

At that moment, I heard Sir Charles talking to some person in the hall. I rose from the chair on which I had sunk down during this speech; and, more dead than alive, with as much strength as I could collect, endeavoured to reach the door. Lord Rivers started up, and, with a frantic air, snatched my hand, which he eagerly kissed, and then hurried down stairs. With much difficulty I reached my own apartment. Without knowing where I was, I threw myself on the bed,

and gave a loose to the agonizing sorrows of my heart. Fortunately the person with whom Sir Charles was engaged, detained him for a few minutes. When he came up, my distress was but too visible. He instantly perceived it, and tenderly enquired after my health. "Indeed, Sir Charles," said I, "I do not think Bristol agrees with me; and as I long to be settled at home, you would make me happy, if you would think of returning immediately." "My dearest life," replied he, with kindness that pierced me to the soul, "you know I live but to make you happy. And though the house at Harwood is not yet in order for receiving company, I will write immediately to Mrs. Clifford, and request the favour of her to see things put in such a way, as may accommodate us; and when there, my Julia may order matters according to her own taste."

"But come, my love," continued he, pressing my hand between his, "you must not give way to this continual dejection. Could the parent you thus unceasingly deplore, behold her darling child, indulging herself in solitary grief, impairing her delicate constitution, and giving a thousand anxieties to the heart of her fond husband, it would interrupt the *felicity of heaven* itself. Oh, my Julia!

you cannot imagine how much I suffer from seeing the friend I esteem, so strangely, so unaccountably changed. Let me not also see the mistress of my tender affection—my companion—my wife, overwhelmed with sorrow, and insensible to my apprehensions on her account."

Every word of this speech struck a dagger to my conscious heart. Ah, my friend, were Sir Charles less amiable, I should be less unhappy. He constantly urges me to go abroad, alledging, that retirement increases my dejection. Whither can I go, Maria, that I do not carry in my bosom, the arrow that poisons all my enjoyment, that has mortally wounded my peace!

Every hour increases my uneasiness, and confirms my resolution of returning home. As Sir Charles wishes to furnish Harwood in the most elegant manner, he begged me to accompany him this morning to a sale of china just arrived from India, and which was said to be remarkably beautiful. Scarce were we seated, when Lord Rivers entered. Sir Charles flew to him with the affection of an old friend, and invited him to take a chair between us. The company being numerous, engaged his attention, and prevented him from observing the extreme perplexity into which we were both thrown by this circumstance. The sale immediately

diately commencing, Sir Charles appeared desirous of obtaining my opinion of several articles he wished to purchase: but the distraction of my mind made me so inattentive and absent, that he could not help remarking it; and at the same time observing I looked very pale, anxiously enquired whether I felt any uneasiness. This unlucky observation increased my confusion; and by drawing the eyes of Rivers upon me, covered me with blushes. I answered Sir Charles, that the room felt very hot, and, as I disliked a croud, if agreeable to him, I should wish to return home. He looked at his watch, and then recollect^{ed}, that he was obliged to meet a gentleman at the coffee-room just at that hour, on particular business; "but I hope," continued he, "Lord Rivers will have the goodness to attend you home, and make us happy, by spending the day with us." My colour again forsook me, on mention of this proposal. After a little hesitation, he replied, fixing his eyes on me with a look that seemed to claim my acknowledgment, "that he was sorry he could not accept of the kind invitation, being already engaged." "We must not then detain you," added Sir Charles, "you will scarcely have time to dress." "I shall not dine till very late," replied he, "and shall first do myself the honour

honour to conduct Lady Mortimer home." I was so confounded, I knew not what answer to make. We set out, and Sir Charles presently left us. Neither of us uttered a word : our confusion and perplexity increased every moment. It occurring to me, that my milliner lived within a few doors, I resolved to call there. As she let lodgings, it might appear to Rivers that I was going to wait on some lady, which would prevent him from accompanying me. But should he even suspect it was a pretence for getting rid of him, any thing was more tolerable than the dreadful silence occasioned by our consciousness, and the prospect of being again under the necessity of seeing him without witnesses. I told him with a low and faltering voice, sufficient to betray the purpose I meant to conceal, that I could not think of encroaching on his time at present, and would step in before dinner, and call on a lady who lived hard by. He made no answer, but, after attending me to the door, with a heavy sigh, took his leave. I was so ill, I was obliged to beg a little hartshorn in water.

On coming home, I found Sir Charles had already returned. He expressed much surprise at my being so long in arriving : and asked me, with a look and manner peculiarly earnest, what I had done with

with Lord Rivers? I felt extremely embarrassed; but following my fixed resolution, of never deviating from truth, I told him, (as I had done Lord Rivers,) that being unwilling to encroach on his time, I had stept into my milliner's, to prevent him from thinking it necessary to attend me home. Sir Charles again remarked the astonishing change on the character, as well as appearance of his friend. "I am sensibly mortified," continued he, "to find a person I so highly valued, and with whom I was accustomed to share every thought, shew so little desire to renew that intimacy which afforded us so much pleasure in the earlier part of life. He behaves to me with a coldness and restraint, which I cannot possibly account for; no disgusts nor misunderstandings having ever taken place between us, and we have not met for five years past."

I was quite unable to make any reply, and the subject dropped. In spite of every endeavour to be chearful, my spirits became so exceedingly depressed, that I could hardly restrain my tears, as often as Sir Charles spoke to me. This did not escape his observation. He took hold of my hand, he expressed the most tender solicitude about my health, and pressing me to his bosom, "My Julia, my love," said he, "tell me I conjure you tell me, does

does any thing give you uneasiness? is there any thing I can do to make you happy?" Quite overcome by his tenderness, I threw my arms round his neck, and hiding my tears in his bosom,—“ Oh, you are too good!” exclaimed I, “ I do not deserve such indulgence, indeed I do not.”—He would hear no more, but presently changed the subject.

Maria! I am often tempted to think, like Araspes, that I have two souls; one to admire, revere, esteem Sir Charles; and another to pity, to pardon, to commiserate—almost to love the unhappy, though guilty Rivers.

Sir Charles proposed carrying me out an airing in the evening. We had hardly gone a mile, when we saw Lord Rivers returning slowly home on horseback, without the slightest alteration in his dress or appearance. On seeing us, he quickened his pace, and rode hastily past the carriage, without taking any other notice of us than a slight bow. Sir Charles fixed his eyes on me for some moments, then, after a pause—“ This behaviour of Rivers is so unaccountable,” said he, “ that I really don’t know whether I ought not to demand an explanation of it?”

—“ For Heaven’s sake, Sir Charles,” said I, (wholly thrown off my guard by this

this unexpected proposal), “do not take any notice of it.”

Conscious of the eager and imprudent manner in which I had pronounced these words, I threw my eyes on the ground, and remained stupefied and abashed. Sir Charles seemed sensibly struck with them; immediately quitted the subject, and through the remainder of the evening, appeared thoughtful, and even dejected.

O Maria! advise me, without delay, what conduct I ought to pursue. This restraint, and continual anxiety, I am utterly unable to support. A consciousness like that of guilt, haunts me where-ever I go. The kindness of my husband adds remorse to my inquietude; and I regard him with jealous fear, and timid apprehension, instead of tender confiding affection.

I have this moment received your consolatory letter. Forgive me, gentlest, best of friends, forgive me, for involving you in distress, which even your sympathy can hardly alleviate, and for which there seems no remedy.—Yet why do I say so? The human frame cannot long support the intolerable anguish of a wounded spirit. There is a remedy—perhaps not far distant, which shall remove every affliction from

from the hopeless bosom of your distressed desponding friend.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXIII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr. Belford.

Bristol Hot Wells.

BELFORD! I am most miserable. Some secret sorrow preys upon the mind of my Julia, which she seems unable to communicate, and the cause of which I cannot divine. Were she less ingenuous, less nobly sincere, by those arts, too well known to many of her sex, she might conceal her anguish, and impose on a husband, over whom she knows her influence is unbounded. But art is absolutely incompatible with her character; and though unable to make me the confidant of her distress—perhaps unwilling to add to that she sees me suffer, she scorns, by the unnatural affectation of ease or cheerfulness, to purchase my peace, at the expence of her own ingenuity.

Most amiable, most exalted of women! how does thy superior virtue rise in my estimation, by every new light in which thy character is placed!

To

To you, Belford—to you the friend, the confident of all my thoughts, I will confess, that jealousy, the most tormenting of all diabolical passions, has sometimes of late found access to my heart.—Do not misunderstand me. I would as soon suspect an angel from heaven as my Julia, of any thing that could in the slightest degree reflect on her honour. No, Belford! it is of her affections alone that I am jealous. It is of that preference, so essential to the happiness of a husband, of which at times I am doubtful—alas, my friend! which I am now almost convinced I never have possessed.

Esteem—gratitude—complacency, these are sentiments by which that heart has been actuated, which I fondly hoped I had inspired with love. That tender affection, which I have coveted as the first of blessings, has doubtless been bestowed on another, who either has been insensible of its value, or ungrateful for the inestimable gift.—A little time will better enable me to discover the reality of those circumstances on which my suspicions are founded, and consequently to give you a distinct account of the particulars. At present my thoughts are in such confusion, that the task is absolutely impracticable.

When I reflect on the dislike—almost aversion, which Julia at first betrayed to

the

the thoughts of marriage; when I review her whole behaviour, her deep and settled melancholy, her stifled sighs, her frequent tears—that letter which caused such violent emotions in her artless bosom; above all, the piercing anguish with which she one day exclaimed,—“O, Sir Charles! for your own sake, for mine, do not urge me to a step which I may for ever repent.”—Belford, my friend! it is too, too plain, the wretched Mortimer has deceived himself—has believed that heart his own, which was already in possession of another.

No grief can equal that which preys on my soul, which affords no room for complaint, and hardly admits of hope. Your sympathy, Belford—your sincere compassion I know will be mine.

Feeble, alas! is the aid even these can at present afford to the wretched

CHARLES MORTIMER.



LETTER LXXIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Bristol Hot Wells.

WHAT, my friend, will become of your unhappy Julia! My increasing restraint, which I cannot shake off, is perceived

ceived by my husband. I fear too, he suspects the real cause, though his unequalled delicacy prevents him from giving the most distant hints of that kind. He sighs often, but always endeavours to stifle his sighs. He really looks ill: there is a certain languor in his whole appearance that touches me to the soul. Last night he was hot and restless, and started so violently at one time, that he awaked me. On my anxiously enquiring the cause, "Do not be uneasy my love," said he, "it is nothing but a horrid dream that frightened me." Some time after, having dropped asleep, he muttered several things, which I could not distinctly hear. But one time he said plainly, "Yes, she loves me—she is incapable of deceit—she is virtue itself." Again—"Ah! if it is so—Heaven knows I pity thee!"

He has several times introduced the subject of Rivers; enquired where I first saw him; how long it is since we were acquainted; and expressed much surprise on learning, that it is only three years since he was a frequent visitor at Harwood. I strove to answer all his enquiries with calmness and ease; but my heart throbbed so violently the moment he began the conversation, that my very endeavours to appear composed, only increased my perturbation. I felt such a painful consciousness,

ness, that I had not courage to renew the subject of returning home; but, on his expressing great uneasiness on account of my delicate health, "I really believe, Sir Charles," said I, "we should be both better at home; and since you are so good as to comply with every wish I form, do not think me unreasonable, if I presume so far on your indulgence, as to entreat you will order matters so, that we may set off for Harwood to-morrow. Sally is very active," continued I, "and rather than remain longer here, I will myself assist her in preparing for our journey. I begin to think, you spoil me with care; and that if I were more active, and less indulged, I should be more stout and healthy."

Sir Charles looked astonished at the suddenness of my resolution, and the earnestness with which I urged my request. But, without making any comment upon it, he went away, saying, he would send up Sally to receive my orders, and give James his without delay.

I go then to prepare for that journey, which will conduct me to the scene of my earliest happiest days. Alas! few, very few of the latter have been my portion. What will be the colour of those that remain, is only known to Heaven! I trust no voluntary offence of mine, will ever cloud their aspect with the gloomy shades

of

of remorse or shame. Whilst we are innocent, Maria, we may be unhappy ; but, without guilt, we never can be completely miserable.

Yours inviolably,

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER. LXXV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

I AGAIN address my beloved friend from Harwood. Every object here wears the face of contentment and peace : Oh, why does not my heart correspond with their silent, yet eloquent language !

Mrs. Clifford was waiting to receive us : tears of grateful joy spoke her cordial welcome. Sir Charles, ingenious in planning little schemes for my amusement, ordered the phaeton the evening after we arrived, and drove me round the park, through which several fine walks had been cut ; which being done so suddenly, and with such good taste, give to these delightful shades an air of enchantment. I strove to express the pleasure I ought to feel ; but my lips and heart were at variance.— How painful is restraint, how insupportable

able disguise, to an open and ingenuous mind ! These feelings are not more new, than hateful to mine.

Maria ! I am every hour more and more miserable.—I could suffer alone, but cannot support the thought of involving others in my wretchedness. Sir Charles, the kind, the generous husband, whose whole study is to make me happy, is himself a victim to my imprudent attachment—or rather unfortunate destiny. Sometimes I think he penetrates into my very soul, pities its distresses, and approves its resolution. He gazes on me till the tears swell into his eyes, then clasping me to his bosom, repeats with energy.—“ Oh, my exalted Julia ! how I love, how I revere you !” At others, pensive and dejected, he labours to conceal his inquietudes; but they prey upon his heart. Every attempt to banish the appearance of melancholy, only betrays the lurking sorrow.

Every thing seems to conspire for my undoing. Seeing me look extremely ill, Sir Charles urged me to take an airing with him in the phaeton this morning; and, for the sake of variety, proposed going on the high road. I consented to accompany him, but my spirits were so depressed, that I could hardly speak. He supported me with his arm, spoke to me with much tenderness; yet I thought,

by

by his looks, he seemed to reproach me with ingratitude. He gently chid me for yielding to my affliction, and reminded me, that as his whole happiness depended on seeing me happy, I ought, for his sake, to strive to banish a dejection, which, as it had a great influence on the present weakly state of my health, might increase, by indulgence, to a dangerous extreme. At this moment, Robert, who attended us on horseback, observing something wrong about the carriage, begged Sir Charles to stop, till he should ride on to the nearest house, and procure some assistance. A cottage, among trees, being hard by, the servant rode up to it; and having borrowed a hammer and nails, returned, with a country man, whom I presently recollect to be William, Lord Cleveland's game-keeper, to whose hospitality I had formerly been so much indebted.

The honest clown testified equal surprise on seeing me, and begged Sir Charles to step with me to the cottage, whilst the carriage was mending, where he was sure Margery would be overjoyed to see me, and give me the best she could afford. I wished to decline honest William's invitation; but Sir Charles would not permit me to remain in the chaise, and, giving me his arm, conducted me towards the house.

house. Imagine to yourself, my dear Maria, what I felt at sight of that well known spot, and the recollection of the circumstances which first brought me acquainted with it. Indeed the effect produced by these was so violent, that I became quite sick, was seized with a fit of trembling, and fainted the moment I entered the house.

The good woman did all in her power to assist me; and on seeing me recover a little, "Good lack a day! my dear young lady," exclaimed she, "is it really you I see again in my poor cottage? Though it is three long years ago, I warrant you have not forgotten the time when you came here with young Master. But though I be his nurse, it seems I must not call him so no more, for he is grown a great Lord now. Well, I said then, and I'll say so still, you were the sweetest, handsomest, lovingest young couple that ever my eyes beheld. Many a crown have I had from him, for carrying letters to your Ladyship. And though Master be a Lord now, were I in his place, I know what I know."

I did not even attempt to interrupt nurse in her harangue. Indeed it deprived me of power to articulate, and almost of my half recovered senses. At last, starting up in an agony of distress, I entreated Sir Charles to step, and enquire whether the carriage was ready; and took that opportunity

opportunity of telling her, that I was married ;—that Sir Charles was my husband ;—and that she must not talk any more in that manner. She shrugged up her shoulders, and expressing the utmost surprise, added,—“ Well, to be sure Sir Charles is a very handsome good natured looking gentleman ; but for all that, I am very sorry for my young Lord that now is ; for here was he no longer ago than yesterday, walking all about the hermitage, and hanging over the little bridge, and looking into the water, as if he had lost somewhat ; and then he came in so humbly, and careffed my little George, and gave him a guinea to buy his first coat and breeches ; and told me, “ Nurse,” said he, “ do you remember when I brought the young lady here that fell into the water ?”—and made me talk so much about your sweet self, that I vow I thought as how you would soon be Lady Rivers, and then”—Here I got up hastily, and wishing nurse a good morning, in the utmost confusion made the best of my way to meet Sir Charles ; but the affectionate creature instantly followed me with a basin of milk, and curt-sying to Sir Charles, “ I wish your Honour all happiness,” said she, “ for I’m sure there is not a sweeter young lady in Christendom. And for old acquaintance sake, dear Madam, I hope you will not

refuse to taste a little of our milk, which you thought so nice long ago, when you and young Master were here.—But I beg pardon, as your Ladyship says, I must not talk of these things now."

I entered the carriage, overwhelmed with confusion, and neither of us spoke a syllable all the time we took to drive home.

Ah! it is too plain, Maria, Sir Charles has suspicions, which I want courage to remove,—perhaps which I have not power to dissipate. What would have been more natural than for my husband to ask an explanation of the cottager's strange story, had he not dreaded to hear it, or apprehended that his credulity would be imposed upon, by some detestable artifice.

I could not have believed, that, with conscious innocence, it was possible to be so completely wretched, as I now feel myself.

Sir Charles behaves to me with tenderness, but it is that which is excited by compassion, not that which used to flow from esteem and admiration. Caution, suspicion, restraint, have taken place, of open unrestrained confiding affection. Maria! if I have lost his esteem—his confidence—I have then no hope remaining!

I forgot to tell you, that when we were about a mile from the Wells, we met Lord Rivers returning from his morning ride. *He* took off his hat, and seemed inclined to pass without speaking; but Sir Charles pulling the string, the coach stopped, and he

he returned. "Shall we see you soon in ——shire, my Lord?" demanded he. "I suppose it will not be long before you visit the Grove."

"My plans are not yet fixed, Sir Charles," said he; "but I shall certainly do myself the honour of calling at Harwood, when I return home."

It is evident, my friend, that Lord Rivers is already in this neighbourhood; but if he has any humanity, any generosity remaining, he will study to avoid a person, to whom he must see his presence gives inexpressible pain. Ah, Maria! which of us has most cause to shun seeing the other? Surely men lose all sense of justice, in their connections with our sex, however much they value themselves on their probity, when transacting with each other. Farewell, my dearest friend! Farewell.

JULIA MORTIMER.



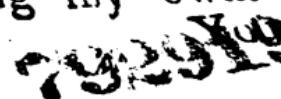
LETTER LXXVI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr. Belford.

Harwood.

YOUR anxiety for me, dear Belford, redoubles my distress, since I cannot relieve it, and must unavoidably add to your uneasiness, by communicating my own.

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You justly observe, that suspense is the most insupportable of all evils. The anguish of suspense, however, is no longer added to the torments of jealousy. No, Belford, I am now convinced, beyond the possibility of doubt, that Rivers, the once endeared, the much deserving friend, is in truth the formidable rival, the unfortunate, perhaps the innocent cause, of all the misery to which I am now subjected. You will confess that my last furnished ample matter for this suspicion: Now the fact appears past a doubt. Judge yourself, from what follows, whether I have not sufficient cause for my conviction.

My wife, on coming one morning into my dressing room, where I was writing at a bureau much crowded with papers, obligingly made offer of sending me a small cabinet that stood in her own apartment, and for which she said she had no occasion, as she preferred her mother's. I readily accepted of her gift, and she immediately retired to empty it, and give orders for its being removed. Having properly arranged all my letters and papers in the cabinet, I was about to lock it, when, observing that it was prevented from closing by one of the drawers, which I thought I had misplaced, I pulled it out, and discovered behind it a slip of paper, rumpled in such a manner

a manner as prevented the drawer from going into its place.

On taking it out, I saw it was a copy of verses, written in my wife's hand, which, without scruple or suspicion, I eagerly read.

Though the paper is without date or superscription, it is evident she has written these verses since the death of her father; and I am at no loss to guess the person to whom they refer.

O Belford! how agonizing is the thought, that the wife who commands my highest esteem, whom I love with a fond, a boundless, an almost idolizing affection, by the waywardness of our fate, is condemned to bestow her's on a man, who, it is plain, has either been insensible to, or ungrateful for, her preference!

Ah! who will pity my untimely fate,
What kindred spirit mourn my early doom,
What gentle maid my hapless tale relate,
Or scatter blooming flowrets on my tomb?

No youth have I that bears a brother's name,
No friend to drop compassion's silent tear,
No father jealous of my virgin fame,
To soothe my sorrows, or to calm my fear!

Thou! ——— wert the guardian of my heart,
The chosen friend I early learnt to trust;
From thee I hop'd a parent's, brother's part—
How couldst thou prove thus cruel and unjust!

Haſt thou forgotten quite that happy time,
With mutual love, when mutual vows we made?

Credul' ty, methinks, is all my crime—
Ah! too severely, by thy scorn repaid!

Yet shall my bursting heart at length find ease,
Nor long this heavy load of life sustain;
Death soon shall come, who the sad bosom frees
From every sorrow, and from every pain.

Come then, and from my dying lips receive
A last farewell, from all resentment free;
O come, and gently bear her to her grave,
Who never lov'd another youth but thee!

Be all her errors banish'd from thy mind,
Soon as the painful toil of life is o'er;
Just to her merit, to her foibles kind,
Blestow one tender tear, she asks no more.

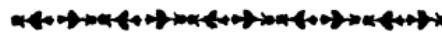
Belford! I am the most miserable of mankind. The strange behaviour of Rivers, of which I gave you an account, is no longer a mystery. Julia's sentiments have not always been confined to her own breast. They have loved, my friend! and by whatever means their union has been prevented, it is obvious they have formerly projected it. Gracious heaven! how irretrievable my misfortunes! how complete my despair!

I am determined to know the whole of their story; not to gratify a vain and hopeless curiosity, but, if possible, to discover the means of recovering the peace of my unhappy wife, and of defending her honour from those cruel suspicions, that may arise

arise in minds less confident of her virtue than myself, from the ignorance and loquacity of a simple cottager, who is nurse to Lord Rivers, appears to be acquainted with their former intimacy, and from whom I may obtain the information I anxiously desire, without stooping to any art, or leading her to betray confidence; as it was plain, from an accidental conversation with her, that what she innocently communicated had not been intrusted to her as a secret.

An account of these circumstances I shall give you in my next. At present, I am so much disordered, both in body and mind, that I must say, Adieu.

CHARLES MORTIMER.



LETTER LXXVII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

MY tenderly beloved friend will easily believe, that my uneasiness has not been lessened this week, by the number of visits paid us on occasion of our settling in the country. With a heavy heart have I received their congratulations. Their wishes for my happiness serve only to make me feel more exquisitely its absence. Amongst

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others,

others, Lord Cleveland, and his two amiable daughters, waited on us yesterday. I felt extreme confusion at sight of the Earl; but his ease and politeness a little reassured me. I never saw more engaging sweetness and affability than is expressed in the countenance and manner of these young Ladies. The eldest, Lady Sophia, who appears to be about eighteen, is the very image of Lord Rivers, and has something so peculiarly expressive in her look, of timid modesty and sensibility, that it is impossible not to feel deeply interested in her, even at first sight.

She told me that her brother desired she might present me with his compliments and best wishes; but, being very much indisposed, he could not have the pleasure of waiting on me.

‘ We are all unhappy about poor Rivers,’ continued she: ‘ That unfortunate wound has certainly affected his health, more than he is willing to allow, because he sees our anxiety. My father wishes him to make trial of Bath; but he has such a weight hanging on his spirits, that I doubt much whether he will be able to persuade him.’

Poor unhappy Rivers! my heart bleeds for his distresses. The compassion we feel for a person we cannot esteem, is painful and incomplete. I now flatter myself, that, struck

struck with the presumption as well as inhumanity of his behaviour, he will no again attempt seeing me—

— Heavens! Maria! how have been alarmed, surprised, terrified, by the conduct of the rash, the unpitying Rivers! His treatment of me is unpardonably insolent, and dishonourable in the highest degree! He must have known that Sir Charles was absent to-day, on occasion of a meeting of the gentlemen of the county on public business. What then could he intend by this ill-timed clandestine visit?

As the air felt very hot in the parlour this morning; I put on my hat, and taking up my basket with a pair of ruffles I was working for Sir Charles, walked slowly down the garden, with intention of reaching the alcove, which you know is kept cool by a breeze from the river. Just as I reached the end of the honeysuckle wall I thought I perceived some one among the trees, but, on stopping a few minutes and seeing nobody, persuaded myself I was mistaken, and pursued the path that lead to the alcove. Being startled by this circumstance, a faintish sickness came over me. I threw myself down on a seat; but recollecting that I should get more air at the river side, I rose; and, on quitting the alcove, the first object I beheld was Lord Rivers, standing with his arms crossed

and his eyes fixed on the laurel, the very image of despair. A sudden impulse of terror and surprise made me cry out. He started from his reverie, flew to assist me, and reached me just in time to prevent me from falling to the ground. When I had a little recovered my senses, I withdrew myself from his arms, which still supported me, and endeavoured to return home: But I was still so faint, and trembled so violently, that I was forced to rest on the bench near the laurel. Lord Rivers again approached me. ‘ How unhappy am I,’ said he, ‘ that the sight of Rivers is now ‘ become so hateful to you, as almost to ‘ deprive you of life! yet heaven is my ‘ witness, I shun your presence—I wish ‘ not to give you pain—I saw your carriage ‘ pass the grove, and supposed you absent.

‘ O heavens! ’ continued he, with a look of unutterable woe, ‘ it was not always ‘ thus. There was a time when Julia ‘ Greville would not have required an apology from me, for coming to this oft ‘ frequented spot. Julia! ’ cried he, clasping his hands together in an agony of grief, can you—can you indeed behold ‘ that laurel, and not pity the once loved, ‘ the now despised, deserted, injured Rivers?’

‘ My Lord,’ replied I, rising, and resuming all the resentment of offended innocence,

nocence, ' You are the last person in the
' world from whom I expected to hear this
' language. To add insult to ingratitude,
' is unworthy of your character—to hear
' any more on this subject were injurious
' to mine. I must therefore entreat, for
' both our sakes, that you will abandon it,
' and the remembrance of the past, for
' ever.' 'Cruel, unrelenting Julia!' cried
he, as I hastily withdrew, ' Insult ! ingra-
' titude ! By heaven, I know not what
' you mean ! Oh that, like you, I could
' indeed abandon the remembrance of the
' past ! But that is impossible.' I heard
no more, Maria. A thousand confused and
terrible images crowded into my mind,
and almost overwhelmed my senses. I
hastened home ; but the words of Rivers
haunted me like a ghost. In vain I strove
to discover their inexplicable meaning.
To accuse me of unrelenting cruelty ; to
profess, in the name of Heaven, that he
understood not the language of my too
just reproaches. Maria ! what can I think ?
My mind is all confusion : A light, more
terrible than the most dismal darkness,
seems to break in upon me—Rochdale
—the daring, the profligate Rochdale
—Ah ! could he—could even that most
determined, unpitying villain, contrive a
scheme of such hellish cruelty ! Maria !
it is,—O say it is impossible.—Rivers !

If thou art innocent!—Oh, Heaven
support me—

* * * * *

LETTER LXXVIII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

I WAS so ill at the conclusion of my last letter, that, when Sir Charles arrived, he was extremely alarmed with my appearance.

He eagerly inquired what was the matter—whether I had taken too much fatigue? I told him I had been no farther than the garden. Has my Julia been oppressed with company, then, demanded he?

There has been none here, replied I, with a voice weakened with sorrow. How! cried Sir Charles surprised, I met Lord Rivers about a mile from Harwood, and, on inquiring from whence he came, he told me, he had been paying his compliments to you? Yes, Lord Rivers was here, answered I, but I only saw him a few minutes in the garden. The confusion and hesitation with which I replied to this speech of Sir Charles, did not escape him. He paused a few moments, fixed his eyes on the ground, then raising them to me, with

with a look of unutterable tenderness, tell me, my Julia! O tell me, cried he, what then has occasioned this sudden and violent agitation? I was silent some moments; I knew not what to answer. In-capable of deceit, abhorring to practise it, I was on the very brink of discovering to my husband every thought of my heart, when suddenly recollecting the fatal consequences which might attend so rash a step, my resolution failed, and I determined, by revealing part of the truth, to conceal the rest.

I am ashamed, said I, of my own weakness; for some time past, every trifle discomposes and alarms me. I went to work in the alcove this morning, when the sudden appearance of Lord Rivers, who was walking in the little grove near it, startled me so much, that I have not yet recovered from my fright. Having seen the carriage pass the grove, he imagined we were absent, and—and—here I stopt, utterly at a loss how to proceed.

An unsuccessful attempt to mislead, is attended, in an ingenuous mind, with intolerable anguish. It was evident that my confused and irresolute manner confirmed the suspicions I laboured to remove. We both remained silent for some time, and, through the remainder of the evening, Sir Charles appeared thoughtful, absent, and melancholy,

melancholy, averted his eyes from me, and sighed so heavily, that my distress became unsupportable.

Maria? is this the happiness you promised your friend? this the reward of duty—the peace of virtue?—Oh! what then are the torments of guilt—

In continuation.

Maria! my friend! my comfortress! why are you not here to support me?—Your friend is sinking to the grave, and she has none to pity her—Ah! wretched Julia!—Most amiable, most injured Rivers, what, O what has Heaven in reserve for thee?

Would my trembling hand obey my desponding heart, I would unfold such a scene!—But it will not, it will not be—The agonies I have suffered, during the last sleepless night, are more than nature can support.—Maria! my rash credulity, my criminal gratitude, have undone me! Mortimer, the generous, the compassionate Mortimer, will be involved in my ruin. He no longer inquires the cause of the misery I vainly attempt to conceal. He regards me with pity; but, alas, he will soon cease to regard me with love. Too surely he guesses the cause of my wretchedness. *He sees too plainly, that gratitude, not*
love,

love, has been the source of my compliance; though, relying on my honour, he generously forbears to reproach me.—Alas, Maria! do I indeed merit reproach?—

I cannot support this restraint—Life is become an intolerable burden.—I will open my heart to Sir Charles; the nobleness of his soul will animate and encourage me in conquering the fatal weakness of my own.—Farewell.—My thoughts are all distraction.—I have much to tell you, but can write no more—



LETTER LXXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

AFTER finishing my last letter, nature being quite exhausted, I threw myself on the bed. A torrent of tears relieved a little the oppression of my heart, and after a while I fell into a profound sleep.

Wholly occupied with the astonishing discovery I am about to reveal to you, my imagination presented me with nothing but images of horror. Sometimes I beheld Rivers struggling amidst the waves, imploring me earnestly to come to his relief. Now I stood myself on the verge of

some

some frightful precipice, from which an invisible hand was impelling me into a dark and unfathomable abyss. And then, amidst scenes of horror and desolation, I was bathing with my tears the wounds of a bleeding husband murdered by the rash hand of an impetuous and despairing lover.

In one of these distracting moments, I started from my sleep, crying,—Save me, O God! from guilt and ruin!

Some one grasped my hand with such violence, that I awoke. I looked wildly round, and beheld Sir Charles kneeling at the side of the bed, and gazing on me with a look of unbearable anguish. ‘My Ju-
‘lia! my dearest, gentlest love,’ said he,
‘what can occasion these violent emo-
‘tions?’ I could only answer with my
-tears. ‘Indeed,’ continued he, ‘you must
endeavour to restrain these wanderings
of a disordered imagination. Your ten-
der frame is unable to sustain such into-
lerable pangs as those I have seen you
suffer. Certainly something hangs on
your mind. My Juia! I would not di-
-tress you for the world: But surely you
can, you ought to have no sorrow, in
which your faithful friend, your fond
husband, may not share.’

I confess, Sir Charles, said I, that some-
thing has occurred which greatly afflicts
me..

me. When I am more able, I will give you the painful recital, though, even from you were it possible, I would wish to conceal the crimes of a father.—Ah! would to Heaven I had for ever remained ignorant of them!

To explain this, Maria, I must inform you, that an application was lately made to me by the children of a farmer near Hartwood, for a will which had been entrusted to my father, and which had not been found at the settling of his affairs. As my mother had received the keys of his cabinet at his death, and as it had never been opened since that time, I resolved, for the sake of these poor people, to make a thorough search for the will. Having looked in vain in several drawers, I pulled out the largest, which contained a number of letters and papers, huddled together in great confusion. Having found the will, I was about to lock up the rest, without further examination, when the address of a letter, in the well known hand of Rivers, caught my eye. It was to my father; and, under the same cover, were several addressed to myself, of various dates, and so much torn, that only a few fragments remained entire.

Read them, Maria! and wonder at the composure of your friend. I no longer sigh or weep; a deathlike torpor has sev-
ed

ed every faculty. I seem to forget all the past; and even my feeling of the present is suspended by my fearful presages of future misery.

Fragment First.

I have read over your last letter a thousand times. Every word of it is imprinted on my heart, and dissolves my soul in liveliest gratitude. Never, Oh never may those fountains of tenderness cease to flow, which you say I have opened within your gentle bosom. These, my love, are streams of pleasure, that will delight and refresh, but never intoxicate. Happy are they on whom Heaven hath bestowed a taste for such pleasures; and whose relish of them has never been impaired by the intoxicating allurements of luxury and vice!

To beguile the heavy hours, that are lengthened to an unmeasurable extent, by fruitless wishes, and disappointed hopes, I have recourse to your letters. Several now lie spread before me, every sentence of which displays some feature of that character, whose gentle yet shining beauties have engaged every affection of my soul. For a moment I follow the guidance of fancy, which conducts me to the peaceful shades of Harwood, and shews me my *Julia*, with looks of ineffable tenderness, tracing

tracing those lines which will soon convey transport to the bosom of her Rivers. At times you retire to the sequestered spot, sacred to love and friendship; you gaze with mournful complacency on the laurel I planted; you water it with your tears: Your mild eyes are now elevated to Heaven, and your breast heaves with an imploring sigh, for the safety and happiness of him you love. This sweet illusion affords a pleasure that approaches nearest to the delight your real presence used to inspire. Ah! when will the short-lived deception be exchanged for the heavenly reality? When shall the blissful hour arrive, when no effort of imagination will be necessary to place your loved image before my eyes? when sense will not prove an unwelcome intruder, nor, as now, disappoint me of bliss, which at present I can only enjoy by anticipation?

It is thus I spend the days I am constrained to waste at a distance from you. I think no circumstance too trivial, no scene too uninteresting, to communicate to you; conscious that love renders all important. Follow my example, dearest Julia! tell me, when you most anxiously think of me, most fondly fear for me, most ardently wish for me, most entirely love me!

Fragm^{ent}

Fragment Second.

Unkind Julia ! Is it thus you remember your Rivers ? I have watched on the beach for two days ; two packets have arrived from Britain, but I have expected my treasure in vain. Surely mine are not fallacious dreams ! In spite of all that prudence can suggest, and experience affirm, to moderate my hopes of complete happiness on earth, I do, my Julia ! I do expect to enjoy, in your loved society, a felicity far superior to the common lot of mortals ; and, in being not only the witness but the promoter of your's, to taste a joy resembling the sweet benevolence of celestial spirits.

If these are romantic expectations, it is your unequalled merit that must justify my extravagance.

I have written three letters since your last arrived at New York. Julia ! my love ! I am distracted with my fears. Hitherto so punctual, to what can I attribute this delay ? I will accuse the winds or waves as the cause of my disappointment ; you, kindest, best of friends ! you I never can —

Fragment Third.

— No, my distracted soul ! it cannot, *cannot* be. Suppress thy vain, thy impious

ous fears. Is she not mine by honour, friendship, love? by the most sacred and solemn of all engagements, that of the heart? What could she propose in abandoning him she loved? Would not remorse and sorrow be her portion?—No, her temperate mind knew not the rage for distinction or wealth. Love made all her wishes; love will alone make the happiness of a soul so noble, so disinterested as her's.

Such, my Julia! are the reflections with which I soothe my afflicted heart, as often as the British ensigns appear, that bring joy to all but your Rivers! Ah, Julia! must disappointment for ever be my portion? Must I for ever languish in vain expectation of beholding again the lines traced by that dear hand?—Alas! at this moment, perhaps, arrested by sickness, by death!—

Fragment Fourth.

I struggle in vain to shut my eyes to the truth. No longer can I be blind to your falsehood, or my own misery. Julia! is it possible! is Rivers, an exile from his country, become an alien too from your heart? What then remains to support life?

Two years, two lingering joyless years have elapsed, since I beheld her on whom

my

my soul repose, for smoothing the horrors of war, binding up my bleeding wounds, perhaps receiving my last sigh, which I shall breathe out in prayers for her happiness !

During the course of days and nights, spent in severest hardships, and unremitting toils, what has supported your Rivers, but the fond, the faithless hope, of returning with honour and fame to you, and to his country ; to look back with exulting affection on dangers encountered for your sake, and endeared by your tenderness !— Farewell, deceitful prospects—too fondly indulged, too ardently desired—farewell !

Yet think—Oh timely think, though you should not be mine, you cannot with honour be the wife of another. You may be enriched, ennobled, but you never can be happy. That heart of your's is not formed to relish the empty glare of life. Julia ! misguided maid ! you have miserably mistaken the road to happiness— Perhaps it is not yet too late—Julia ! rest & on the anguish you are inflicting on him you loved—What have I done to deserve it ? O let not a father's blind ambition—

Letter to Mr. Greville.

—You say true, Sir ; I certainly have no right to controul your daughter's inclinations,

clinations, nor oppose her establishment in the world; especially as you assure me her marriage with Lord Rochdale is entirely her own free choice. I confess it would have been satisfactory to have received this information from herself; but, as her late conduct leaves me no room to question the reality of her present determination, I have nothing left but to acquiesce in a resolution which you say is unalterable.

May Miss Greville enjoy all the happiness in this union which she can hope to derive from wealth and grandeur; and may that happiness never be interrupted by reflecting on the part she has acted towards the much injured

GEORGE RIVERS!

Maria! can you read these letters, and yet believe that I am alive? that I still breathe, and think, and write?

I know not what is the matter, but I really think I have felt so much, I can feel no more. An icy coldness creeps through my veins; I am seized at times with shiverings; my pulses throb so violently, that I hear them on my pillow. I got up to write, but cannot hold the pen. Maria! the hour perhaps approaches—I know not what I would say—perhaps I shall soon be well. Maria! my friend! farewell. Remember in your prayers
your

your afflicted Julia, who is incapable of praying for herself.

LETTER LXXX.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr. Belford.

Harwood.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is the last wretched resource of the jealous, to seek relief in the confirmation of those very facts, from the bare suspicion of which all their misery arises.

Though you may conceive the torment of that suspense in which I have been held since Thursday, you know me too well to believe, that to rid myself even of that distracting uncertainty, I could be guilty of a mean or dishonourable action. Alas, my friend! I am no longer doubtful or uncertain. Conviction, fatal conviction, has reached me, and overwhelmed in ruin all my gay prospects of happiness.

Oh, Julia! by what fatality have we been condemned to pursue virtue, and, instead of felicity, obtain only disappointment; to wish each other's happiness, and yet render each other completely miserable!

Belford!

Belford! it is now palpable! I have cruelly deceived myself; I have never possessed the heart of my wife, whose virtues increase my esteem and admiration, at the very instant when I learn that my misfortune is without remedy; that I can never hope to obtain her love.

This morning, after giving some orders to my work people, I returned to the breakfasting parlour, with a design of reading to Lady Mortimer Miss Seyward's beautiful poem of *Louisa*, which she had never seen. But, not finding her there, I went up to her dressing-room, in which, there is a book closet, where she usually spends an hour after breakfast.

The door being open, I entered, and throwing myself down on a sofa, resolved to wait for her return.

Soon after, I heard Julia speaking to a country-woman, who followed her into the dressing-room, and whom I supposed to be one of her numerous pensioners. Being engaged with a book, I paid no regard to the conversation, which I was prevented from hearing distinctly, by the door of the closet being almost shut. Not long did I remain in this state of indifference: My attention was suddenly roused, by the dreaded name of Rivers, pronounced with a faltering voice by Lady Mortimer, who was talking to his nurse. My first im-

pulse was instantly to quit the closet, but reflecting how greatly my appearance at that moment must surprize my unhappy wife, I resolved to continue where I was.

My confusion was too great to allow of my attending distinctly to what passed. It was sufficient to convince me, that the anguish of my Julia's mind is not inferior to that which she has innocently inflicted on her wretched husband.

After talking to nurse some time, 'Indeed,' replied she, 'your La'ship may believe me, nothing was farther from my thoughts than to offend you; but how could I think you would be angry for putting you in mind of old stories, and how much young master loves you.'

'You mistake me, answered Lady Mortimer, you have not offended me; but I wish to make you understand that it is not prudent to mention these things before my husband.'

'I'm sure, please your La'ship, had I known the gentleman was your husband, I would have been burnt sooner than utter a word of the matter, and neither will I again even though young master himself should ask me.'

'How, nurse, demanded Lady Mortimer in great agitation, did you ever mention this subject to Lord Rivers?'

'Why, I did not mention it to him.'

‘ Why, your La’ship knows,’ answered she, in some confusion, ‘ I could not tell a lie, when he came on Thursday, and asked me if your La’ship had met with any mishap, as he had seen Sir Charles and the chariot standing at the door ?’

‘ And pray what did you tell him, hastily demanded Lady Mortimer ?

‘ Why nothing at all, but that your La’ship seemed very poorly, and forbade me to talk of him, and former days ; and was all in a treinble when I mentioned his having lifted you out of the water ; and as how you said these things were all over now, and you was married, and bid me say nothing more about them.’

‘ After a deep sigh, and a pause of some minutes, ‘ Nurse,’ said Lady Mortimer, in a weak voice, ‘ I beg you’ll be very attentive to what I am going to say. The only reason of my asking you these questions, was, my fear lest your imprudence might involve Lord Rivers and my husband in a quarrel. It would be very improper that the world should know any of these circumstances you have just told me ; let me therefore have your promise, that you will never open your lips on this subject to any creature, unless you could bear to see me made miserable.’

‘Heaven forbid!’ exclaimed the good creature; ‘I will not only give your La—slip my word, but my Bible oath, never to utter a syllable of the matter; no—not to my own husband, tho’ he can keep a secret as well as either Lord or Lady.’

After this, Lady Mortimer remained some minutes alone in the dressing-room, and gave way to the most extreme affliction. Mine was cruelly aggravated by the impossibility of alleviating her’s.

At length she retired, and I returned to my own apartment, in a state of mind hardly to be conceived. To avoid the necessity of seeing her suffer affliction, that will only be increased by my presence, I shall set out instantly for R—, on pretence of business, which will detain me till the evening. To-morrow I shall dispatch this.—Oh Heaven! what hope, what relief, can to-morrow bring to your wretched friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER?

In Continuation.

I did not return till ten last night. I found Julia in bed, and very much indisposed. She wished me to retire to another apartment, lest she should disturb me. I was alarmed by the tremor in her voice, and

and could not bear to leave her in such a situation. After a night passed in greater distress than I can describe, which was augmented by the consciousness that sleep was as much a stranger to my afflicted partner as to myself, I arose, and having begged her to lie quiet for some time, if possible, to obtain that rest of which she stands in great need, I am set down to pour out to you those griefs which I feel insupportable. O Belford! what can I do for the relief of my suffering, my most deserving wife? I could bear my own, but her distress perfectly unmans me.

Rivers must soon return to America. He is young and amiable: Some other object may efface from his heart that passion, which now to cherish would be criminal. From time, from absence, much may be expected. In him inconstancy would be a virtue.

But, Julia! most admired, most unhappy, what remains for thee? What can the most tender assiduity, of the most affectionate husband, do more, than add to all thy cruel sufferings, the anguish of self-reproach. Heaven only knows how I love, how I pity, thee; how far, how very far, my heart, which is almost bursting, is from reproaching thee!

A message is this moment brought me; Lady Mortimer got up to write. She was

was seized with fainting fits, is put to bed, very ill, and desires to see me without a moment's delay. My God ! what will become of me ?

LETTER LXXXI.

To Miss Herbert, from Lady Mortimer's Maid.

Harwood.

SIR Charles bids me inform you, honoured Madam, that my beloved mistress is very ill. I have delayed acquainting you with her dangerous situation from day to day, in expectation of her being better; but, alas, she grows worse and worse every hour. I know not which you would pity most, my master or mistress. He neither eats nor sleeps, never stirs from her bedside, and is quite inconsolable. The physicians say my Lady has just one chance for life. Ah, madam ! them that are gone have much to answer for.

As my Lady left her last letter on her writing table, and she was unable to get up to finish it, she desired me to fold it, and address it to you. It was all wet with her tears. Will you, dear madam, forgive the presumption of the servant that loves

loves her as her own life? I did look into the letter, for I saw my Lady's great affliction, and well did I guess the cause; for I knew the love young Lord Rivers and she bore each other long ago; and many a salt tear I have wept for my beloved mistress, when I thought he was never to return. Oh, madam! it would have been better now for all parties if he never had.

Close by the letter lay this paper, which I think safest to enclose to you, dear madam, as I am sure my beloved mistress would not choose any one to see it, and nobody can tell into whose hands it might fall. If it please Heaven to restore her, such things would only serve to renew her grief; and perhaps she may not recollect her having written it, as the fever had greatly disordered her head, before she was carried to bed.

‘ Retired from the hurry of the world,
 ‘ to these quiet moments, when “ the soul
 “ calls itself to account, and gives itself au-
 “ dience amidst the silence of the passions,”
 ‘ I find myself standing on the brink of an
 ‘ immense abyss, into which one fatal step
 ‘ may plunge me, and leave me in a state
 ‘ of wretchedness, of which I cannot even
 ‘ form an idea, and from which all hope
 ‘ of relief is cut off for ever!

‘ Great God ! whom in sincerity I have
‘ endeavoured to obey, pity, strengthen,
‘ and direct me !

‘ In one moment of madness, shall all
‘ the mercy of Heaven be forgotten, all
‘ my sacred engagements renounced, the
‘ happiness and honour of my faithful con-
‘ fiding husband betrayed, my peace ruin-
‘ ed, my enjoyment of this life poisoned,
‘ my hopes of a better utterly destroyed
‘ — And for what would I quit the
‘ path of rectitude, the sweet consciousness
‘ of innocence, the approving smiles of the
‘ world, the honest joy of a fair fame ? to
‘ forfeit, in one guilty moment, the esteem
‘ of a husband to whom I owe the strong-
‘ est obligations of duty and gratitude ; to
‘ requite his confidence, by the violation
‘ of his and my own honour ; to renounce
‘ all title to the respect, even of the man
‘ whose love I should pretend to reward,
‘ by this dreadful sacrifice ; to take from
‘ the best of human passions every ami-
‘ able and respectable quality ; and to
‘ descend to a level with the meanest of
‘ the human race. To see every brow
‘ clouded at my approach, every eye
‘ averted from mine, and the tongue silent
‘ with shame, that wont to be loudest in
‘ my praise !

‘ Forbid, O heavenly Father ! forbid
‘ the guilty thought. Let not imagina-
‘ tion

tion presume to enter these unhallowed paths ! Recall me by thy powerful voice ! Restore me to thy favour ! Oh restore me to reason, to duty, to myself ! —

Friday morning.

Indeed, dear madam, my heart will break ; the fever increases, and Sir Charles seems stupified with grief. My Lady is often carried, especially when she first goes to sleep, and very little of that she has. James and I prevailed on my poor master to retire a while, and go to bed in another room last night. My Lady opened the curtain, and seeing no body but me, ‘ Where is Sir Charles, Sally ?’ said she, in a low voice. ‘ Are you sure my father will not destroy him too ?’ I closed the curtain, in hopes she would go to rest ; but she started every moment ; and at one time cried so loud, that Sir Charles heard her, and came hastily into the room, looking as pale as death. When she saw him, she stretched out her arms, and folding them round his neck, ‘ O ! come, come, my dearest husband,’ said she, ‘ you must not leave me : Though I have not loved you as I ought, I will love no one else any more.’ He seated himself on the bed, held her burning hands in his, made a sign for me to sit down at a little distance, and strove to compose my dear Lady to rest.

She often dropt asleep for five minutes, but always awaked delirious.

About midnight I heard her say, ' Tell me not that I am guiltless! is not my soul contaminated? Did not my lips profane the sacred indissoluble vow, when I promised to love one, while another had my heart? Then, after a long pause, ' Yet Heaven is my witness! I would not hurt my husband—I pity thee, Rivers—I once could do more,—but these times are gone, gone for ever!'

At another time, 'O do not frown, my love—you ought rather to pity. I cannot bear your anger; I will not again do any thing to deserve it—Indeed, Sir Charles, I wish never to behold the unfortunate, abused, deceived Rivers: But your gentle heart would compassionate him, did you know all!'

After this, she fell into a profound sleep, in which she continued for more than two hours; then awaked with these words, which, without any signs of disorder or confusion, she pronounced in a low and distinct voice. ' My God! I thank thee, who hast opened my eyes to behold my danger, and given me strength to fly from it! Oh never let this heart, which reveres thy laws, wander from thee or virtue more!'

After

After another soft slumber, she became quite composed, took a little sustenance from Sir Charles, and seeing him greatly affected whilst supporting her in his arms, she leant her head on his bosom, and raising her mild eyes, swimming in tears, she fixed them on him, with the look of a benevolent angel: 'Pardon, Sir Charles,' said she, 'Oh pardon all the grief, the trouble I have given you ! my life ! my husband ! Heaven has restored me to your prayers ; I will yet live to be grateful for all your goodness, and (I humbly trust) to make you truly happy !'

Never, madam, did I witness so affecting a scene. Sir Charles gazed on her with something more than admiration, with reverence, and idolizing affection. And, after thanking God for her safety, and pressing her to his heart, Be composed, be well, my Julia, said he, and I shall be completely blest. The continuance of your health would only have made us contented; the restoration of it will make us happy !

I will now send my letter away, because I can with truth assure you, madam, that my Lady is certainly out of danger. Sir Charles will hardly credit the physicians, whilst all the servants are half crazy with joy. For my part, I am now as sick with happiness as I was with sorrow. May Heaven

Heaven long continue her precious life. Though it seems ungenerous to wish the delay of a change of infinite advantage to her; yet surely, dear madam, as our good old James observes, her bliss is not delayed by her recovery, since Heaven must inhabit such a soul as her's. Again craving your forgiveness for my presumption, and all the errors of this hurried letter, I subscribe myself, with becoming respect,

Madam,

Your most humble,
Obedient servant,

SALLY DORMER.

LETTER LXXXII.

From the same.

MADAM,

Harwood.

I THINK myself highly honoured by the few lines you sent me, and, agreeably to your desire, take up my pen to assure you, that Lady Mortimer, though still very weak, is free from all complaints; and, notwithstanding her late danger, the physicians say, that the event they dreaded will not now happen, if great care is taken

to

to keep her quiet. Sure I am, dear madam, were my Lady Queen of Great Britain, she could not be better attended, or get more prescriptions. Every one thinks it a privilege to be near her, and would fly to serve her; but Sir Charles will not permit her to take any thing, except out of his own hand.

You would be delighted, dear madam, for the love you bear my mistress, to see how she is beloved by all the gentry round. John has got a list of names, two yards long, of people who sent here every day to inquire after her. But that name is not down which should be oftenest there. For, though Lord Cleveland, and the sweet young Ladies, sent twice every day, Lord Rivers came every evening, in the dusk, to the alcove at the bottom of the garden, and sent for me, and made me tell him every circumstance about my Lady. And yet I did not tell him all neither; for I was so frightened, when he asked me if ever she mentioned his name, that I begged him, for Heaven's sake, not to ask me any more questions. I never saw grief equal to his. I am sure my heart bleeds for him more than ever. Ah madam! did he know all!—but that he never must.

My Lady and Sir Charles comfort each other, and really seem quite happy; but poor Lord Rivers has none to comfort him.

him. ‘Sally,’ said he last night, with a heavy sigh, ‘I shall not come here any more; it might displease your mistress; therefore do not mention to her my having been here at all.’

I promised, and would have kept my word; but my Lady, when there was no one else in the room, asked me to read over the names. When I was done, ‘Is there no one besides, Sally?’ said she. I knew what my Lady meant, and could not bear that she should think herself neglected by one who was once so dear to her; so I even told her all the truth. She made me weep with her goodness.

‘Sally,’ said she, ‘we were brought up together, and you have ever been more like my sister than servant. You know that my affections were once another’s; but they are now immovably fixed where they ought to be, on the kindest of husbands, and the most generous of men. I pity Lord Rivers with my whole heart; we were both cruelly deceived; but may both be much happier in the disappointment, than we should, perhaps have been in the completion of our wishes. The near prospect of another world, my good girl, set all the concerns of this in a new and striking light; and even convinced me, that such a degree of happiness, as would tend too strongly

ly to attach us to earth, by banishing from our thoughts our future destination, would in the end be productive of misery. Let us remember, that each day is a step advanced in the short journey of life, and strive to act that part now, which we shall wish to have acted, when we reach its close.'

I am sure, Madam, if ever there was a saint on earth, she is one, and I always feared most, when I thought of all her good deeds; for such people are oftenest taken away, from this bad world, to that heaven where only they can be safe and happy. My dear Lady bids me say, that she will soon write to you herself; but I fancy she must ask Sir Charles's leave first; for he is so much afraid of her relapsing, that he hardly ever leaves her. I am,

Madam,

Your very respectful,
Humble servant,
SALLY DORMER.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Lord Rivers to Captain Stanley.

I CONFESS, Stanley, you have cause to reproach, but far more to pity me.

This

This sickening apathy renders every exertion painful, and every employment burdensome. Of what can I write? of what inquire? What now, in this world, can excite one desire in that breast which grief and despair entirely possess? Oh, my friend! how insupportable is the load of life, when not one hope remains to lighten the intolerable burden!

The bitterness of self-reproach is now added to the anguish of disappointment. To inflict unnecessary pain, on whatever pretence, is ungenerous. I ought to have shunned Lady Mortimer, convinced as I was, that she could not behold, without extreme uneasiness, a person she had so greatly injured.

Stanley! I know not what to think! The violent agitation she betrayed at our last interview, and the long and dangerous illness by which it was succeeded, convince me that she is still far from being indifferent, and that the resentment she so strongly expressed, was occasioned rather by grief than contempt.

The reproaches she then made me dwell for ever on my mind. In vain I strive to comprehend their mysterious meaning. Unhappy Julia! how has one error altered thy whole character! Is it not sufficient to be unkind and faithless! Must you be also severe and unjust!

I shall

I shall soon bid her and England an eternal adieu. Yet, ere I go, it would afford me some small consolation, to learn from her own lips the cause of her strange conduct. Alas, my friend ! even this poor consolation will, I fear, be denied. After expressly prohibiting me from writing, after flying from me at the very moment when chance presented her with an opportunity of trying to excuse, to vindicate herself, what hope remains that she will ever descend to do so ? My friend ! her actions cannot bear an explanation. Her marriage with Sir Charles Mortimer is a stronger proof of the natural, the astonishing levity of her disposition, than even that with Lord Rochdale could have been of her avarice.

Would to Heaven that I could obliterate all remembrance of her former affection, by that of her inconstancy ; and tear from my heart an image which is utterly unworthy to possess it.

Like a forlorn wretch, I still linger near the scenes, where my happiness lies buried.

It shall not long be so. Though I cannot hope to recover my own peace, my presence shall not interrupt her's ; nor will I, by a conduct so unmanly, forfeit your friendship,—the only good on earth I prize.

I will embark for America in the very first transports ; and, since life can no longer

longer be enjoyed, seek relief in an honourable death. I can never wish even to regain Lady Mortimer's affections; but, O Stanley! I still wish to preserve her esteem, and to force her to regret him whom she has voluntarily abandoned. Farewell.

GEORGE RIVERS.



LETTER LXXXIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

WITH weak eyes, and a feeble hand, I once more take up my pen, to thank the kindest, best of friends, for all those expressions of sympathy and tenderness that have soothed and consoled my heart in the hours of extreme affliction, and during a tedious and alarming illness. Ah, Maria! in what a light does my former weakness now appear! While standing on the very confines of the unseen world, how vain seem the cares, how transient the sufferings, how empty the pleasures, how criminal the frailties, connected with our present state! Hardly dare I trust myself to look back to that giddy height, from which my tortured imagination recoils appalled, and from which my criminal

passion

passion seemed ready to precipitate me. Hardly dare I recollect the horrors that seized my mind, when I thought myself about to appear in the presence of immaculate purity. Those errors which I had pardoned as involuntary weakness, appeared at that awful crisis little less than pre-meditated crimes. My ingratitude to the husband, whose whole care was to render me happy, whose whole happiness depended on my affection ;—my guilt, in nourishing a criminal preference, which I shuddered to avow, which I never could indulge, without the certainty of misery and ruin ; the danger of losing the esteem of my husband, of destroying my peace, of forfeiting the favour of Heaven ; these, these, Maria ! pierced my soul with anguish, and even overturned my feeble reason.

From this deplorable depth of darkness and woe, the hand of the Almighty hath been stretched out to save me. Whilst I shudder at the recollection of my late danger, I thankfully acknowledge my deliverance ; and humbly and ardently pray, that God may confirm my resolutions for virtue, and establish my feet in those paths that are at once pleasantness and peace.

The first step towards my security shall be that of laying open my heart to my husband.

husband. Thank Heaven, I entertain not one thought there but what he may behold without uneasiness, and even with pleasure. I know the nobleness of his soul; his approbation will invigorate my resolution, and animate my perseverance; his confirmed esteem will teach me to respect myself. The next shall be that of writing to the amiable unfortunate Rivers. Sometimes I have thought of seeing him; but I am so very weak, and easily agitated, that I dare not hazard an interview. Sir Charles watches every movement, shuns every affecting subject, and the care with which he avoids the one at present most interesting to my heart, shews too plainly how deep an impression it has made on his own. How noble is his conduct, how singular his delicacy, how unequalled his tenderness! But I hear his foot on the stairs, and must hastily fold this up, that he may not see how much I have written. Your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXXV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

AT length the affecting interview is over, the confession made, and the criminal

nal absolved! O more, far more, Maria! admired, praised, endeared, to the heart of the generous husband, who too fondly doats on her.

Yes, Maria! it is with truth moralists affirm that virtue is its own reward. If the practice of virtue will not ensure complete happiness, in a state intended for discipline, it will at least supply a store of self-approving reflections, from which the mind may derive peace and consolation, even in its saddest hour.

Conscious that I have acted right in flying from Rivers, in resolving never to see him more, in striving to do justice to the superior worth and boundless affection of my husband, my soul has attained a heavenly quiet, which nothing, I trust, will again interrupt.

For several days past, Sir Charles has carried me out a little way in the phaeton; and, as the roads cut through the woods are remarkably smooth, and the weather still clear and dry, I have gained surprisingly since I began these little excursions.

Last night, Sir Charles asked me, whether I had no curiosity to try my strength in a short walk, and proposed going the length of the alcove. I was surprised, on reaching it, to find it adorned with some pretty landscapes from the adjacent country, which you know is beautiful; and still

still more so, when Sir Charles arose, and pressing a little spring in the wall, a door flew open, and discovered a small mahogany desk, with shelves, on which were arranged an elegant assortment of books. 'Here, my Julia,' said he, 'when you tire of your own thoughts, you may amuse yourself with those of your friends and favourites: There is only one recess here,' continued he, 'the power of which I shall hold as discretionary: My love must not dwell too much on affecting scenes, and melancholy objects.' I looked surprised, when Sir Charles, to avoid startling me, told me he had ordered my mother's portrait, which hung in the drawing-room, to be brought here, and placed with a curtain before it, in another recess, of which he presented me the key. This instance of delicate attention quite charmed me; I gave way to the first grateful impulse of my heart, and wept the thanks I could not speak. Resolved on my confession, this seemed a favourable moment; but my heart throbbed with such violence, that I could not articulate a single word.

Whether Sir Charles guessed my design I know not; but he instantly arose, and presenting me his arm, told me I must not stay too long, for fear of the damps, and conducted me home.

This

This evening, the weather being remarkably fine, after a soft shower, I strolled down the honey-suckle walk. There was a solemn stillness in the air, which was perfectly in unison with the tone of my mind. I was regaled with odours from the birch and sweet briar, and listened with delight to the notes of a thrush, who seemed to linger in the shade after all his companions, in order to serenade me. By the time I reached the lake, the whole sky was in a glow, and the fantastic forms of the broken clouds were reflected from its surface, with a beauty above all description. I sat down to contemplate the last trembling rays of the sun, which now gilded the wood, and to listen to 'the drowsy tinklings of the distant folds.'

The sober twilight that succeeded, suited the languor of my spirits. My thoughts were wrapt in contemplation, and my mind soothed to a degree of melancholy tranquility, when I was roused by the voice of my husband. He approached, and taking hold of my hand, gently chid me for going out alone. "Ah, Sir Charles!" said I, "I have need sometimes to retire—to reflect—to think of what is past—my folly—my ingratitude—this is a sacrifice due to Heaven—~~to~~ you—but and dearest"—here my weak spirits entirely

tirely forsook me, and I fell motionless into the arms of my husband.

He pressed me to his bosom—“ My Julia, my life,” said he, “ do not pain my heart ; do not talk at present of what too much agitates your’s. O be assured, my love, I know the rectitude, the spotless purity of that heart—I am even confident that I now possess its undivided affection.—Let us quit the subject, my Julia, let us return home.’ “ Oh never, never,” repeated I, covering my face with my hand-kerchief, “ till I have opened to you its most secret recess, and shewn you all its weakness.”

“ My exalted angel,” interrupted he, “ its weakness has been virtue, humanity, compassion! But what have been its noble struggles ! how admirable the fortitude ! how glorious the conquest !” A shower of tears having somewhat relieved me, I entreated Sir Charles, in the most earnest manner, to listen to me a few minutes. I then briefly communicated the particulars of my first meeting, and early attachment to Rivers ; the fatal discovery of the letters, my subsequent distress, and the unalterable resolution I had formed, of never again beholding him ; and ended with my intention of writing immediately to Rivers, and making the same confession to him, as the strongest proof I could give, that

that my friendship and esteem for him were increased, whilst my love was no more.

“ Julia!” said he, gazing on me with the most melting tenderness, “ you was ever admired, ever esteemed;—you, you only know how ardently beloved! But where is the language that can express the admiration, the delight, the sacred enthusiasm, with which I now look up to your exalted virtues! Yes, most admirable, most ingenuous of your sex, I regard you not only as my heart’s chosen friend and companion through the various journey of life, but as a benignant angel sent to conduct me to those mansions of purity and peace, where our joys shall know no interruption, our felicity no end.”

I arose, and opening the recess, and drawing back the curtain, “ If thou, beloved parent,” said I, “ art a present, though invisible, witness of the felicity of thy child, how must thy heart expand, even to rapture, to behold her snatched from perdition, by the remembrance of thy early instructions, and confirmed in virtue, by that of thy blameless life.” Then kneeling, and raising my clasped hands to Heaven, “ Do thou, O Omniscent! witness of my inmost thoughts, behold with compassion the sincerity of my

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contrition, and assist the resolutions now formed in thy sight."

The tears of my husband accompanied mine, and for some moments he remained lost in silent astonishment. He raised me from the ground, clasped me to his bosom, and entreated me, in the most earnest manner, to return home, and never again endanger myself by such agitating scenes. But, indeed, Maria, his fears are groundless; the burden which this conversation has removed from my mind, has not only restored me to peace, but cheerfulness. It is only clouded by the doubtfulness I feel with respect to the manner in which I ought to address the unhappy Rivers.

Perhaps it might tend most effectually to extirpate the remains of his ill-fated passion, were I to leave him in his error with respect to my conduct. But, if he is the noble, the generous Rivers I once knew him, he would rather suffer the exquisite pangs of hopeless, unavailing regret, which the discovery of my innocence must occasion, than continue, as now, to believe me guilty, and be forced to despise the object of his once tender esteem and affection.

I have repeatedly written and blotted, and still feel my spirits so unequal to the task, that I must delay it till a night's sleep has restored them.

Good

Good night, my friend; may Heaven watch over your slumbers, and may you awake to that sweet contentment and tranquility which is the portion of virtue, and the companion of innocence.

JULIA MORTIMER.

Lady Mortimer to Lord Rivers.

“ After shunning you with so much care, after suffering such pain in your presence, after being reduced to the borders of the grave, by the sight of your distress, you, my Lord, can be at no loss to guess the cause of my behaviour. It must have convinced you that you still held too dear a place in a heart, which duty, honour, gratitude, had for ever devoted to another.

“ Misled by circumstances too painful to be enumerated, I believed you inconstant, ungrateful, perfidious. I believed it my duty to drive you from my heart, and to bestow my hand on another. Alas! we were both cruelly deceived. Heaven, in mercy, hath brought me to the verge of the grave, that at the awful moment of approaching dissolution, when the voice of conscience is heard, and that of the passions is silent, I might see the baseness, the danger of harbouring a sentiment in my bosom which was treasonable to the best of husbands, and which, till that moment

I never had conquered, because till that moment, I never had seriously resolved, and vigorously endeavoured to do so.

“ I make you this confession, my Lord, without reserve, though not without shame. At the altar, I vowed that honour and obedience to Sir Charles Mortimer, which it is the pleasure of my life to pay ; but I did more ; I vowed that love, which I was conscious I had not to bestow. That love is now added to my confirmed esteem and tender gratitude, for a conduct influenced by every principle that can exalt and endear the human character. He has long loved your's. It is with his perfect approbation I now make you this confession. If the tender friendship of two persons to whom you are unspeakably dear, can console you for a disappointment, of the bitterness of which they are both qualified to judge, you may be comforted. And, if any spark should remain of that love you once bore me, let the sacred flame be converted into friendship, consecrated to honour, and fed by the generous joy of beholding me truly happy.”



This letter, my dear Maria, I sent by James three days ago, with orders that it should be delivered into the hands of Lord Rivers. I have received no answer, but had

had the mortification of hearing from Lady Sophia, who called here this morning, that her brother has been so ill as to keep his chamber. Most amiable, ill fated Rivers ! how my heart bleeds for thy distress ! His gentle sister would not be absent from him to day, but says, if he is better to-morrow, she will come and spend the day with me. Never have I met with more prepossessing modesty and sweetness than are expressed in the countenance and manners of this young Lady ; she seems to regard me too with that flattering preference which makes itself known to the heart, without the aid of language.

The constant endeavours of my husband to render me happy, produce all the effects he wishes, and diffuse through my soul, now freed from restraint and apprehension, a serene tranquility, which the sweet scenes and quiet of the country serve daily to confirm. Sir Charles, too, has regained all his natural cheerfulness. Indeed, his tenderness for me seems to increase in proportion to the efforts I make to deserve it. Every instance of complaisance, every obliging expression, or look of affection, he receives with marks of such lively sensibility, as leads me to bestow more tenderness on him, than I ever thought it possible I could feel, far less express. He scarcely ever leaves me ^{alone}.

lone; reads such books as he thinks will amuse and interest me; occupies me in making improvements on the house and gardens; and carries me to visit the cottagers, that I may enjoy the most refined luxury, that of relieving the distresses, rewarding the industrious, and promoting the comfort and prosperity of all around me.

This morning we set out in the phaeton as usual. After conducting me into the thickest part of the wood, on finding the carriage could go no farther, Sir Charles stopped, and alighting, asked me, smiling, "if I would trust myself with him in the cave of the Enchanter?" "With all my heart," I replied; and giving him my hand, told him, "That as I flattered myself I had now for ever secured him in my toils, I would trust myself with him in any part of the globe."

Having committed the reins to James, and desired him to drive the horses gently about till we should return, he conducted me, by a narrow winding path, down a bank so dark with hazel and oak trees, that I felt a pleasing sort of horror thrill through my nerves. I stopped to contemplate this scene, which was quite new to me. Sir Charles beheld my surprise with marks of lively satisfaction. "Do not be afraid to follow me, Julia," said he; "Trust

“ Trust me, I would not hurt you if I could ; and you have nothing to fear from the machinations of a Merlin himself, whilst surrounded with the arms of your husband.”

By this time we reached a small cavern, which opened into a grotto, the Gothic windows of which overlooked the river, that rushed over the broken rocks with the most soothing murmur.

Nature, my dear Maria, has bestowed on this favoured spot her wildest, most touching beauties. How preferable are such to the expensive labours of art ? That taste must be vitiated in a great degree, that can prefer an imitation to an original. In fact, our most elegant improvements only deserve that name, when they artfully mimic their sublime pattern. To transplant some of the graces of the highly polished, to the rude uncultivated scene, and skilfully to contrast her bold and sublime with her simpler and more modest beauties, is all that art can do to heighten the charms of nature.

Transported with this unexpected and beautiful prospect, I threw myself down on one of the mossy seats, to admire it at greater leisure ; but the air feeling moist in the grotto, Sir Charles would not allow me to continue there. “ Since you approve of my taste in the solemn, let me see,”

see," said he, " whether you think I have been equally successful in the gayer style." Bless me ! exclaimed I, will you never be weary of surprising and enchanting me ? " Never," replied he, " if I am always thus fortunate in pleasing you." Again presenting me with his arm, he led me out of the cavern, and pursuing the narrow path a little farther, it suddenly terminated in a sweet inclosure, adorned with variety of flowers and shrubs, in the middle of which, surrounded with high trees, stood a temple inscribed to Solitude.

" You may now rest in safety after your fatigues," said Sir Charles. " I shall consider this Temple as sacred to you, and never will intrude here, unless when invited. But, may I not flatter myself that I shall sometime be a welcome guest ? May I not hope that my gentle love will admit me to a share even of her most sacred and serious reflections ? " — " Indeed, Sir Charles," returned I, with tears of gratitude, " whenever mine are of a nature to afford you pleasure, I will know none equal to that of sharing them with you."

Ah, Maria, will it be ever thus ? will the wife he now idolizes be ever less tenderly esteemed, less fondly beloved ? Heaven forbid ! else that world, to which his love alone has brought me back, would become like the waste howling desert to the

the forlorn exile, where nothing is left to hope, to wish, or to enjoy. Hitherto disappointment has crossed my path; I will strive to believe that what remains of my journey Heaven will strew with flowers.

Adieu, dear and amiable friend; you are ever present to the thoughts, and dear to the heart of your

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Mr. Belford.

Harwood,

I BEGIN to think, my friend, that, with faculties so limited as ours, we are as unable to support, without sinking, an excess of joy, as of sorrow. When last I addressed you, I was in a state little short of distraction; my misfortunes appeared to be without remedy; and the loss of my Julia's affection seemed only a prelude to the loss of herself.

What an astonishing, what a blessed change has taken place in my situation! A change, which the almighty power of Heaven could alone have effected, and for which my gratitude will be as lasting as my existence.

Julia, my exalted Julia, restored from the very gates of death, is now "mine entirely, mine for ever!"

I will not attempt a description of the deeply affecting scenes of the last fortnight; never, but with life, shall they be erased from my memory, never cease to inspire my soul with love and admiration of the most ingenuous, noble, and virtuous, of the human race.

Oh Belford! think what were my feelings, when hiding her tears and blushes in my bosom, she opened her whole soul to my view! revealed her former passion, and with angelic piety, invoked the aid of Heaven to assist her in renouncing for ever an attachment, which she now regards in the most criminal light.

Nor was this all: While repeating the sacred vows she had formerly pledged to me, with a tenderness of which I thought even Julia incapable, she returned my fond caresses, and assured me, in the most solemn manner, that I now possessed, and ever should possess, her undivided heart.

Belford! my kind sympathizing friend, whose compassion has supported me under the pressure of intolerable sufferings, rejoice with me on occasion of so unexpected, so unhop'd a felicity; but which, till you share it, seems incomplete.

Certainly,

Certainly, the secure possession of any blessing never affords such exquisite enjoyment as we experience on its being restored, after having trembled with painful apprehension of losing it for ever.

So sudden, so rapid has been the revolution occasioned in my mind, in one short week, that I am hardly yet composed enough to taste the whole of my happiness.

I am just returned from wandering with my Julia, through fields, whose verdure and fragrance have refreshed our senses. How delightful is the enthusiasm inspired by the country? How peaceful, how natural, how elegant, the pleasures it supplies? We have followed, at a distance, a band of reapers, and heard with satisfaction their rustic music, and innocent mirth, which lighten those labours that Heaven has appointed to be at once the means of their health, subsistence, and enjoyment.

After listening to the music of the woods, the bleating of flocks, and the murmuring of the distant cascade, how enchanting is it to raise my eyes to those of my lovely companion, and read there the same transports with which my grateful heart expands. Belford! these are pleasures that wound not on reflection, nor pall by repetition. Pleasures that are on

to be enjoyed by those that follow where reason and nature lead the way.

In cities, our best feelings are wounded every moment ; every street presents objects of misery, with whose sufferings (the effects of depravity) we cannot tenderly sympathize, and whose habitual licentiousness baffles every effort of benevolence to relieve them.

Nothing here offends the ear of modesty, or checks the tear of compassion : Vice is still frightful, because not familiar. The alms we bestow are received with gratitude ; and, whilst applied to sustain the feebleness of age, and assuage the anguish of pain, we glow with conscious elevation of soul ; we adore Him who permits us to become the dispensers of his bounty ; we aspire to resemble the great Pattern of Philanthropy, and co-operate with the purposes of divine mercy towards the human race, in diffusing around us peace and good-will.

Write soon, and assure me that you have already forgotten all the uneasiness occasioned by my late distress, in your participation of the present unequalled felicity of your faithful, grateful, and affectionate friend,

CHARLES MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXVII.

Miss Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

YES, dearest Julia, your virtue is triumphant, and your happiness secure, as far as the present state of things will permit. I see, with transport I see, that peace has once more revisited that gentle bosom, which is a mansion suited to such a guest, and from whence, I trust, it will never again be banished.

The emptiness and vanity of life is not, my friend, the peevish complaint of discontent and misery alone; it is the confession of the conscious mind in the height of prosperity, and in the hour of its dearest enjoyment. Even then, something is wanting to form the complete happiness of beings such as we are; a security, a stability, which nothing sublunary can admit of. And, could we suppose a human being to gain possession of every wish, we should soon see him more miserable, from that possession, than others are from the absence, of their darling objects. Hope and fear, in our present state, are not only necessary to the health of the soul, but even to its enjoyment; and hence it appears,

that,

that, to moderate, not extirpate our desires, is the proper office of reason.

It affords me real satisfaction to observe the growing intimacy between you and the Cleveland family; nothing will tend more effectually to restore the amiable Rivers, than to be a witness of your happiness with Sir Charles, and of your perfect ease when in company with himself. Besides the near relation between Lord Cleveland and my uncle Stanley, the partial kindness with which that worthy family treated me, at a period when youth and inexperience require the indulgence which they seldom obtain, will for ever engage my sincerest gratitude.

I am enchanted with your visit to the Temple; but, should some lucky chance convey me soon to Harwood, disappointment, not pleasure, would be the consequence; for the cave, which Nature's self has scooped, is not so hollow, the rocks she has broken so rugged, the roar of her torrent so loud, nor the gloom of her woods so solemn, as those which your glowing language has impressed on my imagination. Gladly, however, would I make the trial; but that at present is impossible; I must therefore rest contented, with assuring my beloved friend of the ever-increasing esteem and tenderness of her.

MARIA HERBERT.
LETTER

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Mrs. Helen Maria Stanley.

AT length, dear Aunt, your Lucy is able to throw aside all reserves, and give you the history of her little light heart. With penetration like your's, I suppose it needs not be a long one; for, though delicacy has prevented you from hinting your suspicions, you must have been convinced, from a thousand circumstances, that Harry Stanley, without plan concerted, or intention declared, had stolen into the garrison, and become master of all its stores. Heaven grant he may think a conquest so easily gained worth keeping!

But, to proceed in order: I was sitting yesterday in the parlour with Maria, when accident placed me in a hotter purgatory than I think my sins deserve. The servant entered with a parcel of letters, which he delivered to her. After casting her eye on one of them, she came up, and presenting it to me, demanded, "how much postage I would willingly give for that letter?" The moment I saw the address, my conscious heart throbbed so violently, I could hardly breathe.

She slyly repeated her question. "The postage must be proportioned to the value

of

of the contents," replied I. "And are you at present a competent judge of these? But come, come," continued she smiling, with provoking archness, "I will give you the letter *gratis*, on condition that you will read it in my presence, and allow me, mean time, to read your countenance."

I seized my little treasure, flew up stairs, locked myself in my apartment, read the delightful confirmation of all I wished and expected, and with implicit faith believed, as fast as Harry could make them, those protestations of everlasting love, which have been a thousand times made, and a thousand times violated.

"Men (says, somebody) would spare themselves a great deal of trouble in imposing on us, if they knew how easy the nobleness of our ideas renders their deceptions.

"A woman thinks herself degraded, by supposing the object of her affections unworthy; and no sooner does she love, than she discovers more perfections in her lover than he dares to feign."

Harry tells me, that he was instigated to the desperate resolution of declaring a passion, (which by his own confession, I ought not to approve,) by hearing of Captain Orde's addresses to me. But, though a new lover, like new wine, may intoxicate a little, the sparkling fermentation of giddy

dy passion is not to be compared with the mellow flavour of well ripened affection; and such I know Harry's to be.

On mentioning the marriage of our two young friends at Windsor, "Happy pair!" exclaims he, "happy even in those little embarrassments which give you an opportunity of discovering to each other the delicacy of your affection, the tenderness of your gratitude, the disinterestedness of your attachment."

This, my dear Aunt, is fine talking; but, were Harry intimately acquainted with the same delectable embarrassments, they would perhaps have as few charms for him as for me. I love him sincerely; but I do not love him enough to make him miserable; nor could I bear the reflection, that, by a cruel indulgence of his wishes and my own, I had involved him in insurmountable difficulties.

Patience is a doctrine which most men do not understand, and which, to lovers, is incomprehensible. Because I will not marry him, I know Harry will pretend to question the reality of my affection: I shall not dispute the superiority of his, nor wish to be less his debtor on that score: Nay, like an absolute bankrupt, I would willingly put myself, and all my possessions, into his hands, were I not certain that, like other merciless creditors, he would obtain

obtain nothing by this measure, but the cruel consciousness of depriving me of liberty, without being himself, a gainer by my thraldom.

His happiness is the object of my wishes; and, however we may at present disagree about the means of promoting it, I trust he shall be convinced of my tenderness, by a thousand proofs, which, flowing from the heart, make their way to the heart; are born with affection, and end but with life.

I need not enjoin my dear Aunt to observe the same silence on this subject as formerly. I cannot mention it even to Maria, who delicately shuns entering into a confidence, which she might be under a necessity of betraying, if questioned by my father, or other prudent relations.

I really wonder whether men feel as strangely embarrassed as we on certain occasions. The moment Harry's name is mentioned, my heart beats in just such a regular measure, as a young drummer at his first exercise; and I feel as if there were a window in my breast, through which every mortal observed its movements. I am resolved to regulate them by your instructions; and, to convince you that they make a lasting impression, shall conclude with your own words on a former occasion:

“With

“ With caution does it become frail and ignorant mortals, to form wishes, or too anxiously indulge them, when they arise. Submission and humility are best suited to our dependent state; and firm reliance on that Wisdom which is infallible, is as much our interest as our duty.”

Mine, joined with sincere affection, is ever your's,

LUCY HERBERT.



LETTER LXXXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

AFTER a day spent in that blissful quiet, which innocence alone can enjoy, and love and friendship confer, I take up my pen to redouble all my pleasures, by communicating them to you.

Lady Sophia came early, and, in the most obliging manner, told me she had brought her work, to shew me that she considered herself as quite at home. There is a serious sweetness in the expression of Lady Sophia's features, that interests your heart the moment you behold her; and the complacency of her manners makes

you

you every hour more pleased with her, by making you pleased with yourself.

I could not help blushing at the earnestness with which she often gazed at me; and the sighs that frequently stole from her gentle bosom almost persuade me that she is the confidante of her brother's distress. I am the more inclined to think so, that she shunned speaking of him before Sir Charles, and seemed much affected by his kind and polite attentions to me.

How happy an exemption did I experience, on this occasion, from that agonizing consciousness which the name of Rivers used formerly to awaken! I spoke of him to Lady Sophia in those terms of esteem and amity which are due to his merit. I tenderly regretted his indisposition, and even bade her assure him, that Sir Charles joined me in ardent wishes for his speedy recovery. I asked, whether he had thoughts of going to Bath? She answered, with a sigh, that he really was so irresolute and variable in his present plans, it was impossible to know on what he would determine.

Sir Charles drove us round the pleasure grounds, and, at my request, conducted Lady Sophia into the Cavern and Temple, with which she seemed quite charmed. "Since your Ladyship is so fond of retirement," said Sir Charles, "and Lady Mortimer.

timer is not yet able for the fatigue of visiting, I think you could not do us a more kind, and, I hope I may add, a more agreeable action, than return here on Monday, and spend the day in rambling about the woods together, as I am obliged to be absent on particular business."

"With all my heart," replied Lady Sophia, with the most engaging frankness. "I begin, however, to repent this rash request," said Sir Charles. "I fear the presence of her friend will prevent my Julia from regretting the absence of her husband."

"Ah, there is no danger," replied she, with a sweet smile, "that Sophia Rivers will ever supplant Sir Charles Mortimer."

Maria! what tenderness, what superior delicacy does Sir Charles possess! After Lady Sophia left me, he came into my dressing room. "I come to ask your advice, Julia," said he; "I really know not how to act with respect to poor Rivers. I am a thousand times more than ever interested in his peace; I know nothing I would not gladly undertake to promote it; but I fear the very attentions of a successful rival, might appear like an insult to a heart yet bleeding from recent disappointment.—Heaven knows how much I pity, how sincerely esteem him!"

"I rode out this evening with an intention to call at the Grove; but, as I approached

proached the avenue, my resolution failed me. The thought of giving pain to a mind like his, is agony. He was just mounting his horse as I came within sight of the house; and, the moment he perceived me, he turned another way, and rode hastily out of sight.—Unhappy, deserving Rivers! may Heaven restore thee too health and peace, if not to happiness!"

I agreed with my husband, that it would be better to decline visiting at the Grove, till time should assuage that distress, which at present could not admit of any relief.

Adieu, my much loved friend; may Heaven's best blessings ever surround you, prays your

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER LXXXI.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

Maria! shall I never know peace! Sir Charles is absent, my bursting heart seeks for some one, to whom it may pour forth its sorrows!—O amiable, respectable, ever to be lamented Rivers! whether shall I most admire thy virtues, or deplore thy misfortunes! May that pitying God, who

has

has restored comfort to my bosom, grant thee speedy consolation! may it descend to thee from Heaven! for, alas! I fear it will never be found by thee on earth!

Sir Charles, as he proposed, set out early this morning. Having waited for Lady Sophia two hours longer than our appointed time of meeting, I ordered the phaeton; and having put a volume of Cowley in my pocket, made James drive me into the wood, and return and wait for Lady Sophia, telling him she would either find me at the Temple or Grotto. Having sauntered about the wood till I was tired, I entered the Temple; and sitting down, took out my book, and read the beautiful and pathetic lines, occasioned by the death of the author's friend.

A croud of tender ideas associated with this subject, my last night's conversation with Sir Charles, the account of the distress and indisposition of Rivers, pity for his unmerited sufferings, and fear lest increasing illness had detained his sister from me, all united to agitate my mind, and overwhelm my spirits to such a degree, that I dissolved in tears. I held my handkerchief to my eyes, and, supporting my head on my hand, gave way for some minutes to the violence of my emotions. Judge if they were lessened, when, on raising my eyes, I beheld Rivers himself standing before

fore me, pale and motionless as a statue. I screamed aloud with surprise, and, not knowing what I did, exclaimed, "Heavens! it is Rivers! it is himself!"

After a few moments of profound silence, I arose, and assuming all the ease and composure I could command, "My Lord," said I, "this is a pleasure I did not expect." He attempted to answer me in the same style; but his voice faltered so much, he could hardly articulate. "I come, Madam," replied he, "to make my sister's apology, who is detained at home by the arrival of company."

My weak limbs trembled so violently, I was obliged to sit down. I desired Lord Rivers to be seated, and endeavoured to say something, I know not what. He threw himself on a seat. We both remained silent; then, after several vain attempts to start some subject, to which he did not seem to pay any attention, he arose, and approaching me, said, with a solemn and affecting tone, fixing his eyes steadfastly on my face, "This is the last time my presence shall give you pain—You have acted greatly—fear not to complete what you have so nobly begun" "Tell me, Julia," continued he, with a look of inconceivable anguish, "tell me, I beseech you, what are the dreadful circumstances too painful to be enumerated? who has deceived

deceived us? who has ruined me beyond redemption?"

I rose, and taking hold of his hand, "Rivers," said I, "I know of what exertions a soul like your's is capable: I will not dissemble with you: I will not fear to tell you all: But, Oh Rivers! as you value my present, my everlasting peace—by that tenderness which united us—that reduced me to despair—that almost deprived me of existence—strive, O generously strive, to follow my example. Make a sacrifice of your dearest hopes to Heaven, which would doubtless have accomplished them, had their success been compatible with our felicity."

He withdrew to a distance from me, and leaning his forehead against one of the pillars, burst into an agony of grief. Maria! imagine what I felt at that moment!

Instead of seeming to pay any attention to his extreme affliction, I struggled to suppress my own; whilst, with as much fortitude as I could exert, I communicated to him the various circumstances which had combined to deceive us, my subsequent distresses, the generosity of Sir Charles, and lastly, the discovery of the letters in my father's repository.

The moment I mentioned them, he seemed entirely to forget I was present.

He threw himself with violence on the ground ; he wept, he raved, he cursed the authors of our misery ; he even implored from Heaven the dissolution of a being which was now become insupportable. Unable to behold such a spectacle of woe, I rose to retire ; but was too feeble to walk without assistance. "Rivers !" said I, "you terrify, you afflict me ; I wished to speak you comfort, but you drive me from your presence. After what I have suffered for your sake, is it generous thus to disturb my peace, to overwhelm me with affliction ! I wish to be your friend ; but you renounce my proffered kindness," — "My friend !" repeated he wildly, "O Julia ! idol of my distracted soul ! is this, is this all that remains for the wretched Rivers !"

I continued silent with inexpressible anguish. He took hold of my hand, and bathing it with tears, "Tell me, Julia," said he, with frightful earnestness, "tell me, I conjure you, "is it really possible you no longer love me, that you have abandoned me to utter despair !—Oh ! and is all forgotten ! Your vows, a thousand times repeated, in presence of Heaven, to be only, unalterably mine ?—Distraction !—Are you not the wife of Mortimer ?—But, what are Mortimer's claims to mine ?" cried he, starting up, and looking

ing wildly round, "I loved you first,—I first possessed your heart, and only with life will I resign it!"

Quite terrified with the violence of his manner, I again attempted rising. With a frantic air he caught hold of my gown. "Stay, one moment stay," cried he with vehemence. "Hear me, Julia—compassionate him you once tenderly loved—Remember this is the last time these eyes shall ever behold you.—Oh stay and witness the anguish of my soul,—and if you can no more—at least pity, while you renounce me for ever!"

A flood of tears came to my relief. "Unhappy Rivers," said I, "I do pity you with my whole heart. But, by that very tenderness you profess for me, shew yourself worthy of my esteem: Reflect, I beseech you, that I am indeed the wife of another, and do not destroy me by talking in this manner."

After many fruitless attempts to reply, he rose, and walked towards the window, here he stood for several minutes, with his hands clasped over his forehead, and his eyes raised towards Heaven; then returning slowly towards me, and fixing them mournfully on my face, with a faint and tremulous voice, "Julia!" said he, "it is past! the dreadful conflict is past! O pardon the unhappy man, who thus

cruelly afflicts you! he will do so no more. Your pious example, your astonishing fortitude, have at length prevailed, and I now look up to you with reverence, as to a superior being!" Then gently taking my hand, and pressing it to his lips: " Angelic purity! exalted goodness!" said he, " fear nothing more from the phrenzy, the extravagance of a man, whom your virtue will at length restore to reason, to honour, to silent uncomplaining submission. Yes! though I will love you with ardour, love you till death, I shall taste the sweet consolation of being assured, that I still love the faithful, the generous, the exalted Julia Greville! That, no longer deceived by appearances, she knows me guiltless; she honours me with her esteem, her friendship! That she will ever regard me with affection—perhaps one day lament me with sincerity. Amiable, admired, adored Julia!" continued he, raising his streaming eyes to Heaven, " live long and happy!—but Oh, amidst health, and joy, and peace, think, think, sometimes of the languishing, desolate, exiled Rivers, who will never, but with life, lose the remembrance of you!"

This was too much for me to support, Maria! Weak, agitated, afflicted, my little remaining strength entirely forsook me, and I fell senseless on the ground. I awaked,

awaked, as from a confused dream, in the arms of the weeping, distracted Rivers, who, after gazing on me some moments in silence, and pressing me to his panting bosom, started up, and replacing me gently in my seat, cried, in a faint voice, "Farewell, Julia! O farewell for ever!" and instantly disappeared.

How strange does it seem, my friend, that I should rejoice in the prospect of being separated from the man, of all others, I most loved! Yes, Maria! I am glad he is gone, gone for ever! I am convinced it is absolutely necessary that we should be divided. Though I no longer love him with a painful, a criminal tenderness, the sight of his sufferings would destroy me. Time and absence, those two great healers of the human heart, whose influence all feel, even at the moment their power is disclaimed, these will, I trust, restore peace to Rivers. My ardent prayers shall daily arise for his peace; but it is only at a distance from each other we can hope to enjoy this first of blessings.

When Sir Charles arrived, he presented me with a card from the Cleveland family, requesting us to dine at the Grove next Tuesday. "As you are so well, my love," said he, "I ventured to promise in your name without consulting you." Seeing me look confused, Sir Charles

immediately guessed the cause. "Perhaps," said he, "it will be best that our first meeting with Rivers take place soon. Frequent intercourse with that amiable family will tend to wear off every disagreeable impression." I was silent; I feared so soon to recall the scene which had so deeply affected me. "Why hesitates my Julia?" said Sir Charles. "If this visit would prove disagreeable, your present weakly state may supply a sufficient excuse for declining it; but, to people who have the prospect of living always so near each other, and who seem all equally disposed to cultivate intimacy, something ought to be sacrificed." "It is alike my interest and inclination to do so," replied I; but, tomorrow, when I am in better spirits, I will give you my reasons for delaying our visit."

With his usual delicacy he immediately changed the subject; and seeing me look extremely languid and fatigued, kindly urged me to rest a little on the couch, adding, with a smile, "Perhaps you could sleep just now without the aid of a sermon; but, I believe, I may venture to defy Morpheus himself, when I inform you that I am going to read *Evelina*."

I mention these particulars, to shew my friend how perfectly Sir Charles understands the art of rendering domestic life agreeable.

agreeable. How strange is it, Maria, that in general we should aspire to shine, rather than please! The former power is confined to a few, and often fails of producing the desired effect; the latter art may be practised by all, and always with success. How strange is it, that, in public companies, where we associate for an hour, and then separate; perhaps, to meet no more, we should be attentive, obsequious, entertaining; and, in the private circle of our friends, and families, where the display of our talents, and exertion of our benevolence, can be of real utility, and meet with certain approbation, we are careless, indifferent, negligent, and even unkind!

Would we consult our own happiness, we should strive to promote the happiness, of others. It is only when our pleasures are reverberated that they become delightful.

Adieu, adieu. If I write any more, you will be as tired with reading, as I am with writing this letter.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER XCI.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I REGRET the anxiety my silence has occasioned you ; but it was unavoidable : The perturbation of my mind, during my interview with the unhappy Rivers, had so visible an effect on my health, that, to remove in part the uneasiness of the best of husbands, I was obliged to account for my illness, by giving him a detail of the melancholy particulars.

Were it possible for Sir Charles to rise in my esteem, he would have done so on this occasion. How blest am I, my dear Maria ! in being no longer under the painful necessity of labouring to conceal that sorrow, which it is impossible not to feel exquisitely, and which can only be moderated by being participated.

I confess to you, in spite of all the tenderness of this generous best of men, I feel it difficult to conquer the extreme affliction which the deplorable situation of Rivers has renewed. His image is ever before my eyes, such as I saw him at the moment of our separation, wild, despairing, almost distracted. I tremble to think

to

to what extremes a man of such keen sensibility, and with such high wrought passions, may be driven! May Heaven, in pity, restore him to peace!

Fain would I hope, Maria, that time, absence, and the active scenes connected with his profession, will dissipate, by degrees, the remains of a passion, which we are assured cannot always exist when deprived of hope. One wish, O strange inconsistency! I have not yet courage to form, that another object might entirely banish from his heart her, who can no longer with honour possess it. Maria! dare I breathe this weakness to you! Yes, because I am conscious that I no longer indulge it; that the dying embers which pity has a moment revived, virtue will instantly extinguish.

As my spirits are very languid, I will lay aside my pen till to-morrow.

In Continuation.

I was surprised this morning with an early visit from Lady Sophia. She looked extremely dejected; and, on my inquiring anxiously after the health of her brother, she burst into tears. "Rivers," said she, "set out this morning for Bath. Do not blame him, dear Lady Mortimer, (kindly taking hold of my hand,) I am too

young, perhaps, to merit the confidence he has reposed in me, but I will strive to deserve, and never will abuse it. Oh, Lady Mortimer, how I love, how I pity, my dear brother! When he heard that you and Sir Charles were to dine at the Grove on Tuesday, he told me that he felt it would be utterly impossible for him to be present, without betraying his secret to the family, all of whom, except myself, are ignorant of it." "As my furlough expires in three weeks," said he, "I will spend them at Bath; perhaps the waters may be of service to me. I will then return to the Grove, and see you once more before I embark. Take this picture, Sophia, and present it to Lady Mortimer. I know she will sometimes think of me, and this image may help to bring me to her remembrance.

"Often mention me to her, my dear sister; it will be a consolation to me, when I am far distant, to think that I am tenderly remembered by two such friends." When he bade me farewell, there was a look of such peculiar sadness expressed in his countenance, that it pierced my heart to behold him: He turned back at the door, and said, in a low and melancholy voice, Sophia! Remember your brother, Remember his last injunctions!"

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When I reflect on the whole of his manner, I cannot help suspecting that he is deceiving us with a false hope of seeing him again; and that he intends going directly from Bath to Portsmouth. My father has used every argument, short of an absolute command, to prevail with him to resign his commission. But you know him too well to wonder at his resolution. He says, 'To desert his station in the very middle of a contest, so important to his country, were little less than treason.' He has promised, however, in the most solemn manner, that the moment he can quit the army with honour, he will return to the embraces of a parent and sisters, who now repose all their hopes on him.

I received the picture with much satisfaction, and desired Lady Sophia to inform her brother, when next she wrote, that it should remain with me through life; and that his virtues should continue to be cherished in that breast, which his image should henceforth adorn.

When Sir Charles entered, I presented him with the picture. "See," said I, "what an invaluable treasure Lord Rivers has sent me." He looked at it with tender complacency; and again restoring it to me, "It is indeed invaluable, from its resemblance to the original," said he. "Preserve

"Preserve it with care, my Julia; it is worthy of its present situation. I consent that this new favourite shall share with your husband his most precious possession, your affectionate, your faithful bosom."

Lady Sophia's looks sufficiently expressed her admiration of Sir Charles's generous behaviour; and, presently after, on his quitting the room, "Most sincerely do I participate in your felicity, my dear Madam," said she; "since Heaven forbade that you should be Lady Rivers, it is my chief consolation to see you Lady Mortimer."

Company being engaged to dine at the Grove, Lady Sophia was obliged to leave me about one o'clock. The day was delightful, and I wished to enjoy it abroad. I tapped softly at the door of the library, where I knew Sir Charles was sitting. Being deeply engaged in a book, he called, in a careless manner, "Come in." I did so; the moment he perceived me, he sprung from his seat. "My Julia! my love! is it you? Forgive my rudeness: But Locke is a foe to good breeding, and must answer for my offence." "I know not," said I, "whether you will pardon mine; by destroying the chain of your ideas, perhaps I have robbed the world of some important discovery." "Ah, Julia," returned he, "to discover that I am beloved

beloved by you, that my presence gives you pleasure, is worth more than the applause, the admiration of the whole world to me."

"But I am going to incroach on your time, as well as your thoughts," said I; "the recollection of the delightful scenes we visited last Thursday inspires me with a restless curiosity to take another view of them: That I had with you was but a superficial one: Besides, I wish to consecrate my Temple to love and friendship, instead of solitude; and, that I may never disjoin your image from it, you must attend me, while I pay my first devoirs there."

"With transport, will I attend you," he replied, "secure that you will conduct me to virtue and happiness—Oh! Julia," added he, with a sigh, "what pity is it that mankind so miserably mistake the road! Would to Heaven half the young men of my acquaintance would come to Harwood, and learn what it is to live, to be reasonable, to be happy!"

We set out on our little tour. Every object was beautiful, and our minds were in harmony with the quiet which surrounded us. When we reached the Temple, the recollection of parting there with Rivers rushed on my mind, and forced repeated sighs from my bosom. My affectionate husband remarked my silence, and fixing

fixing his eyes on me with an earnestness that soon recalled the colour which had left my face, tenderly inquired if I felt any uneasiness ?

“ It is impossible !—I feel it is, Sir Charles,” said I, “ by any effort, entirely to banish the recollection of the past. In proportion as my own happiness increases, my regrets on account of Rivers—so amiable, yet so unhappy, likewise increase. An exile from his friends, a stranger to our felicity, not even your loved society can obliterate from my memory the anguish I saw him suffer here.”

“ With a heart possessed of such sensibility as your’s,” interrupted he, “ it cannot be otherwise ; but, let me share, at least, my dearest Julia, in these regrets, so due to him, so worthy of yourself ; I do not wish to banish, though I fondly hope to moderate them ; and it is delightful to be assured, that, on every occasion, our feelings are perfectly in harmony with each other.”

Just as Sir Charles ended this speech, a servant came to inform him, that a gentleman waited for him on particular business.

Wishing to indulge my reflections a little longer, I prevailed with him to leave *me* alone, promising to follow him in a few minutes. Deeply affected with the kindness

kindness and delicacy of Sir Charles's whole conduct, which I was now at leisure to review, I took out my pencil, and wrote the following lines on one of the pillars, intending that he should find them there next time he visited the Temple.

Let no unhallowed feet approach this Grove,
This is the sacred Fane of virtuous Love!
None who would truth abuse, or faith betray,
Or smooth with specious arts seduction's way.
But come, O Mortimer! whom love inspires,
Whose bosom glows with friendship's sacred fires,
Who feels for human kind, whose generous soul
To one devoted, not forgets the whole;
Candid to merit, liberal to distress,
Who only tastes when giving happiness:
A dearer joy than solitude can give,
Thy Julia from thy presence shall receive;
A higher bliss than calm reflection prove,
The bliss of boundless confidence and love;
Then hither come, renew thy vows with me,
This Temple opes its willing gates for thee!

I had just finished, and was standing with my pencil in my hand, when Sir Charles entered softly. I started with surprise, and endeavoured to conceal what I had written, by directing his eyes to some distant object. But my confusion at once betrayed, and frustrated my design. "How!" cried Sir Charles, "another attempt at concealment, after having formerly succeeded so ill? But, indeed, my Julia, your modesty shall not rob your husband of one effusion of that dear heart he

he now calls his own, and which has already afforded him such exquisite pleasure." So saying, he gently removed my hand from the place, and read the verses.

" My Julia! my angel!" cried he, his eyes sparkling with surprise and pleasure, " How many ways do you contrive to enchant me! You, alone, of all the human race, know the true art of enjoying life. If you go on in this way to intoxicate me, you will positively unfit me for keeping company with men and women in their sober senses."

In this manner, my friend, we pass our time most agreeably. Never more, I trust, shall disguise or restraint be known between us. Surely, Maria, of all tasks which duty can impose, that of dissembling is the most difficult. Of all indulgences friendship supplies, that of unbounded and fearless confidence is the most delightful.

I am often astonished to hear people complain of the dullness and insipidity of a country life, and the languor inseparable from the uniform tenor of the marriage state. If we suffer ourselves to sink into sloth or inactivity; if we wrap ourselves up in a joyless and selfish indifference; if we are at no pains to be generous, kind, self-denied, and disinterested; to encourage, by our own, the good humour and complacency of others, where is the rank,

the situation, the circumstances, that will banish listlessness, or supply enjoyment? But surely, with health, peace, and competence, the proper duties of a domestic state, the aids of reading and working, the exercises and amusements peculiar to the country, one may contrive to fill up every hour, both with pleasure and advantage. But, if superadded to these, we enjoy the refined, the elegant pleasures of love, friendship, devotion, charity,—we may affirm of such a life, that it is a positive blessing, an exalted privilege, a commanding heaven! Such may every future year prove to the friend I love! Already possessed of these inestimable blessings, soon may your presence convince me, that my heart is susceptible of emotions still more lively and delightful than any I have yet experienced: By being at once a witness and sharer in my felicity, soon may you convert serene contentment to heart-beating joy!

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER XCII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

LADY Sophia's suspicions were but too well founded, my dear Maria. A sudden order for the troops to embark, before the equinoctial storms, has obliged Lord Rivers to quit Bath, and set off directly for Portsmouth. She brought me a most affecting letter to day, which she had just received from him. He paints, in strong pathetic language, the struggle between his desire to see once more his friends in —shire, and his dread of giving pain to one in particular. He says, that, not daring to confide in his own resolution, if within a mile of Harwood, he is determined to set out immediately for Portsmouth. He expresses admiration of Sir Charles's noble conduct, and gratitude for his kind remembrance; and adds, "that envy of his happiness is almost extinguished in approbation of his worth." "Happy, unconscious image," concludes he, "how I envy thy situation; yet happier, far happier Rivers! Thou adornest her bosom, but he shares her heart."

This little sally afforded me the liveliest satisfaction. It bespoke a mind more at ease

ease than any of his former letters had done. O may Heaven watch over him, and soon restore him, in health and peace, to that family, and those friends, to whom he is unspeakably dear!

I often wonder, Maria, at the astonishing variety of sentiments of which the human heart is capable. There is a tenderness in the sympathy, a poignancy in the regret, I feel for Rivers, for which language furnishes no adequate expression. The sight of his hand never fails to make my heart throb with a consciousness that alarms me, with a painful, too painful remembrance of the past.

I never read any of his letters to his sister without dissolving into tears; and, to you, Maria, the confidante of every movement of my soul, to you I will acknowledge, that the compassion his misfortunes excite, is of so animated a nature, that it renders me jealous and unquiet, when I contrast it with those serene and tranquil sentiments which the kindness of my husband alone inspires.

I flatter myself that this is to be imputed to weakness, not perverseness, and that Heaven will pardon an involuntary offence, to which my will consents not. In truth, my friend, I am persuaded, by fatal experience, that the vivacity of our first impressions can never be equalled by any succeeding

succeeding ones; that, in the heart which has once tenderly, truly loved, the enthusiasm of affection can never be a second time renewed; and that a soul, long depressed by affliction, can scarcely be re-animated by love.

These sentiments, at first sight, seem treasonable, from one in my present situation; but I hope I am neither criminal in feeling, nor imprudent in repeating them to you. I am truly grateful for my unequalled blessings; nay more, I am happier, far happier than the generality of my species; and, did not officious memory often whisper what I once was, reason, with what I now am, would render me completely blest.

So conscious am I of the danger of harbouring sentiments which, under the insinuating forms of friendship and humanity, might enfeeble my weak and unsettled resolutions, that I have this day offered a sacrifice to duty which, I confess, required all my courage, and of the propriety, and even necessity of which, I am now convinced, by the pain it cost me.

Fearful of the consequences of allowing myself to read at times those letters, every sentence of which is too deeply engraven on the tablets of my heart; and, distrustful of my resolution, never again to indulge my sight with tracing the lines, impressed

pressed by the hand, and breathing the very soul of Rivers, I carefully collected them this morning, and was tying them together in a bundle, when Sir Charles hastily entered my apartment. His unexpected appearance threw me into the utmost confusion. A few tears had forced their way down my cheek, as I took a last survey of the little treasure, from which the most exquisite enjoyment of my life had once been derived. This did not escape the watchful affection of Sir Charles. He stopt. "I beg pardon, my love," said he, in a tone softened by compassion, "I fear I disturb you. I thought you were in your dressing-room, else I would not have intruded in this manner."

I could not speak; my heart swelled almost to bursting: But holding out my hand, as wishing him to approach, I gave vent for some moments to the painful variety of feelings, too agitating to be restrained. Then holding out the parcel, marked, "Letters from Mr Rivers to Miss Greville," that my husband might read the superscription, I arose, and with a trembling hand committed them to the flames. "The happy wife of Sir Charles Mortimer," said I, "ought to have no regrets connected with the unhappy Julia Greville."

He gazed on me some moments in silent astonishment; tears swelled into his eyes, and

and clasping me to his throbbing bosom, with a deep sigh he exclaimed, " O Julia, exalted pattern of all that is amiable and respectable, others know what is right, but you love it; others talk of virtue, but you practise it. Think not, my dearest Julia, that such a sacrifice as this was necessary for the security of your husband's repose. No, my love! my reliance on you is fixed as my dependance on Heaven. It may, however, be necessary, for the peace of your own bosom; that gentle, that compassionate bosom, is too much alive to every human woe, and must have bled afresh at every remembrance of one whose constant attachment merits your gratitude, and secures my esteem."

The recollection of this affecting interview, Maria, still greatly agitates my spirits: But how little should I deserve the affection of such a husband, did I not embrace every opportunity of making you acquainted with the whole excellency of his character?

Seldom have I more earnestly wished for your presence than this day, when our admired Dr—— discoursed, with his usual energy, on the nature and importance of the Christian temper. How would your soul have vibrated in sympathy with the sentiments of the preacher, whilst he touched, with masterly skill, some of the finest

finest feelings of the human heart.

During the service, Sir Charles regarded me with pleased attention, and when it was over, "Julia," said he, "I have been listening to your character. Your's is that extensive charity, that fervent piety, that forbearing gentleness, that graceful humility,"—"Hold, hold, Sir Charles," said I, "the pride which your praise at this moment inspires, is an incontestible proof of your mistaken opinion."

After all, Maria, there is not a stronger incitement to virtue (the approbation of Heaven excepted) than the praise of those whose esteem we covet, and whom we truly love.

That soul must be miserably debased, which can derive pleasure from the imputation of merit, which it is neither conscious of deserving, nor desirous of attaining.

I feel sensibly the effects of Sir Charles's speech, in the cheerful flow of my spirits, and the grateful glow of my heart. Ah, my friend! is it for us to be proud, who are thus dependent on accidental circumstances, not only for the tone of our minds, but even for the exercise of our virtues? Mine, alas! are but feeble and imperfect. Indeed, Maria, I am not what my partial friends think me; what I ardently

dently wish to be. But I will never cease imploring Heaven to endow me with that pure, peaceable, gentle wisdom, whose fruits sufficiently prove that its origin is from above.

Adieu. In one point I never can deceive you, or myself, I mean the tender and lasting affection with which I am your sincere friend.

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER XCIII.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Mrs. Helen Maria Stanley.

London.

YOU are unjust, both to yourself and me, my dear Aunt, in alledging that it is from want of confidence in your friendship that I remain obstinately silent, on "the subject most interesting to my heart." And is it not a proof of wisdom to be silent when one cannot speak to the purpose? I wish to Heaven half my sex were of my opinion!

You still accuse me of an unpardonable love of ridicule: How would you admire my forbearance, had you passed the day *with me*, which I unwillingly have been compelled

compelled to waste, in the company of two of the most foolish of all the foolish virgins I have ever yet encountered ; and who think to do honour to Heaven, and establish a high reputation to themselves, by bolting out religious sentiments in Scripture-language, in all companies ; and, with the most disgusting grimace, spiritualizing every occurrence of their stupid lives.

How indelicate, how imprudent, is such a conduct ! how opposite to the humble and modest spirit of Christianity, how injurious to the interests of religion itself ! Nothing, surely, can betray a greater want of understanding. Had I thought them hypocrites, I would not have spared them ; but, as I believed them only fools, I was silent.

But, to return from this digression ; I am sorry to inform my dear Aunt, that there is yet no change in the aspect of my affairs. You say justly, " my desires are moderate—life is short—wealth cannot give happiness,"—and twenty things equally true, and equally inapplicable to the case in question. But, though Harry has artfully contrived, by making you his confidante, to engage you in his interest, allow me to remind you, that *something* is necessary towards existing with decency, and that at present we have *nothing*. In spite of all I have heard of the joyless, tasteless

tasteless ease of affluence, I still must think a decent competence absolutely necessary to comfort ; and, however Harry affects to doubt of my sentiments, were he possessed of three hundred pounds a year, I would leave prudence, and all her virtue-favouring train, to those better fitted to improve by their society ; marry him to-night, and cure him at once of his love and his infidelity.

My dear Aunt, advise Harry to support with patience an absence, the necessity for which we must both regret ; and, whilst we follow the path that reason points out, let us cherish the hopes which affection inspires. Let us accustom ourselves to view the bright side of our prospects, and trust that time and fortune, or rather that Providence, has many happy events in store for those who patiently wait their arrival.

Pray, tell me all the news of the country ; at present, dullness reigns unrivalled in town. How I admire, how I envy you the possession of those singular and superior abilities, by which Nature has distinguished you, and which have rendered you perfectly independent of those frivolous amusements on which half our sex rely for enjoyment. The expectation of the future is the source of the most sincere pleasure I now taste ; and, though all innamo-

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rato's must either feel or feign those doubts, fears, and apprehensions, which are the very elements of love, believe me, Harry is not ignorant that this separation is at least as irksome to me as to him, though I do not make such a fuss about it.

I have been lulled to stupidity of late, by calm content. My soul is not made for it. I must be agitated with pain or pleasure: Nay, fully to enjoy life, I must be able to give both. Here, neither is in my power. Would I were married! Then it is that a woman becomes mistress of her divine prerogative; then she can never be at a loss for a subject on which to exercise her every humour.

Constantly to repeat assurances of my esteem and affection, would, I think, imply a suspicion that you were sceptical on that head. You do not, you cannot, distrust those I have already given you: You never can be so unjust to your own merit, or my sincerity, as to doubt, that with unbounded affection, I am your's ever.

LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER XCIV.

Mrs. Helen Maria Stanley to Miss Lucy Herbert.

Stanley Farm.

THE voice of praise, my dear girl, is ever soothing: No ear is so dull, no heart so cold, as not to be agreeably affected by it. Though the season of youth and vanity is long since gone, I am pleased with the praises you bestow on what you term "my singular and superior abilities." Trust me, Lucy, a humble, pious, ingenuous heart is far preferable, in my opinion, to the most shining talents that ever distinguished any of the human race: And a life formed on the precepts of the Gospel, a thousand times more happy and respectable, than that of the most illustrious hero, that ever ignorance extolled, or superstition deified.

How unreasonable are they, my dear Lucy, who affirm, that Christianity is either adverse to the interests of society, or enjoyments of life! It furnishes the noblest motives for good conduct; it enforces virtue by the most powerful sanctions; it raises around its votaries a strong defence against the pernicious maxims, and contagious manners of the world, by placing continually

continually in their view those awful and sublime objects which are forgotten or overlooked by the rest of mankind, amidst the pursuits or pleasures of life.

The reflections you make on that indiscreet zeal, which leads many well meaning, but weak people, to introduce religious subjects into all companies, and the peculiar language of Scripture into all conversations, are extremely just.

This disgusting practice betrays a want of good taste, no less than of judgment, and has the worst effects imaginable, particularly on the minds of young people. The extravagance and hypocrisy of the fanatics, have left disagreeable impressions on the minds of men, and given them a peculiar disgust to that style of language they adopted. And, to make use of it on common occasions, is to secure to one's self the appellation either of fool or knave. It is long before the world, which has never been famous for candour, can shake off a prejudice so deeply rooted, and, alas ! to this day, too often justified, by the harsh manners, and severe morose tempers, of many who profess superior sanctity.

As good advice is a diet I never greatly relished myself, even when cooked in the most skilful manner, it goes against my conscience to cram it so unmercifully down *poor Harry's* throat. I shall venture, how-

ever, to assure him, in the language of experience and truth, that, when the mind is supported by hope, and gently agitated by the pleasing schemes for future enjoyment which it supplies, a state of expectation is often productive of more happiness than that of secure possession.

You desire me to tell you all the news of the country; I would willingly gratify my dear Lucy, but death and marriage have so contracted the circle of my acquaintance, that I am totally ignorant of any occurrences beyond the farm-yard, the church, or the garden. These, in general, bound my travels; and I am sunk into that very character, which, in the days of our lofty ideas, and sublime sentiments, we used most to deride and condemn—an indolent, insipid, useless old maid—What, then, remains for me, thus retired from the world, neglected and forgotten? To nourish a gloomy unsocial temper, to indulge in peevish complaints, to become the victim of discontent, idleness, and imaginary evils, to live unblest, to die unregretted? No, my Lucy. Be it mine to soften the domestic pains, to share the domestic pleasures, of my real friends; to soothe the little cares of life, to reconcile its differences, unite its competitions, explain its misunderstandings; to watch over the immortal interests of those, who, engrossed by

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the world, disregard them themselves; to promote them by my advice, my example, my prayers. These laudable, these important ends, my Lucy, by being uniformly pursued, will give a relish to life, even after its exquisite pleasures are flown: These, I trust, will ever endear the character, and excite the activity, even of your old and indolent aunt,

HELEN MARIA STANLEY.



LETTER XCV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

I CONFESS it is with reason you accuse me of forgetfulness; but, though I have omitted mentioning Mrs. Clifford for some time, I have not neglected to pay her those attentions which are due to merit and misfortunes like her's.

Last week, Sir Charles told me, that he thought it would be a more eligible plan to fix a salary on Mrs. Clifford, than bring her into the family, where the impertinent curiosity of servants might lay her under a disagreeable restraint; but proposed giving her the choice of her way of life. Accordingly, we paid her a visit last Thursday,

day, when Sir Charles told her, that there was a pretty farm-house and garden belonging to him, about a mile from Hartwood, perfectly retired, and sweetly situated, which, if she preferred it to living in our family, should be fitted up for her without delay.

I really do not think, continued he, that it would be proper for your little Clara to be in the house with so many servants; and it would rather be a disadvantage to her, to be educated in a style superior to what she would be obliged to live in, on going abroad into the world.

The worthy Mrs. Clifford thanked him with tears, and embraced with much joy a scheme quite suited to her inclination; which at once secured to her the retirement she loved, and obtained for her child the advantages of occasional society, and the protection of friends, on whose prudence and generosity she could rely.

Accordingly, she removed last week to her new habitation; and yesterday I paid her my first visit.

On asking her how she liked her retreat? "With my whole heart," replied she; "but your Ladyship little suspects in what a neighbourhood you have placed me; I am, it seems, within a few steps of Hell; and the simple cottagers have already

ready offered to conduct me thither by the shortest way."

To explain this, Maria, I must inform you, that the country people, ever prone to superstition, have bestowed this tremendous epithet on a deep cavern, into which a beautiful cascade pours with great velocity, and which they affirm to be without a bottom. The scenery round it is romantic and picturesque, in the highest degree. On one side rise green sloping hills, shagged with wood, and on the other is stretched a fertile plain, through which winds a beautiful river. The fantastic roots of oak, wreathing themselves among the broken rocks, which are adorned with a variety of wild flowers and shrubs; the distant prospect of mountains, bleak and barren as those described by the son of Fingal, and of valleys, "where the tempest whistles through the long grass, and the thistle shakes its lone head to the blast," combine to form a prospect sublime, and romantic beyond description.

When I was first solicited to go to hell, I started with horror; but, like other simple votaries of his subterranean Highness, after being persuaded to take the first step, I found the way so easy and pleasant, that I never stopped till I reached the bank of the river. The appearance of the ferryman and his boat, the opposite fields, and

novelty of the whole scene, introduced into my mind a new train of ideas; I could not help imagining myself on the verge of the Pagan Infernum; that it was the waves of the Styx on which I was about to launch, and surly old Charon, whom I waited for to convey me across the ferry. This idea took such possession of my mind, that no sooner was I composed to sleep last night, than fancy presented me with a dream, of which I shall give you the particulars.

The first thought that struck me, on finding myself on the borders of the other world, was the appearance I was about to make before Rhadamanthus. In the most violent hurry and agitation, I began to rummage my pockets for my accounts, which I knew must immediately be laid before my judge. But, what was my shame and astonishment, on recollecting that, though I had always intended putting them in order, I had delayed so long, that I had forgotten at least one half of the articles; and that the loose memorandums which still remained in my possession were so blotted and unconnected, it was impossible to make any thing of them.

Upon this I began to bewail my folly, with all the anguish of unavailing regret; which being observed by Charon, he reminded me, with a most malignant sneer, "that I need not discompose myself for want

want of my accounts, as there was a little book, called Conscience, in which every thought of my heart was faithfully registered ; and which, though I had thrown it aside for some time, I should find restored the moment I entered the court of Rhadamanthus.

To divert my thoughts from the dismal subject which now occupied them, I began to ask some questions of Charon, particularly, What was the reason his boat was so poorly freighted ?

I soon found that I had touched his sore heel ; for he replied, with a dreadful imprecation, and a frown dark as the waves of Cocytus, " That he was positively resolved to throw up his commission, and continue no longer conductor to Hell : That his boat was of no use, now that Passion and Prejudice had taken the lead of mankind ; and Infidelity discovered a new road through the gate of Licentiousness, where Remorse stood ready to conduct them to Despair, from whom they learned a very short passage into the realms of Pluto, by the way of Suicide.

The violent manner in which he pronounced these words awoke me ; but the effect they produced in my mind is not to be described. I started with horror at recollection of my late situation ; I resolved to be warned by my dream to prepare for

that hour which must determine my everlasting state, and when, with triumph, or with shame, I must stand in the presence of Him, from whose impartial sentence there lies no appeal.

Adieu, Maria, adieu. You are one of those on whom my heart relies for smoothing the path of life, in which I have already encountered many difficulties, and know not how many more may yet await me.

Let your friendship support me on my journey, endear its pleasures, beguile its fatigues, and sweeten its close. The conviction that I already possess it gives pride and joy to the heart of

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER XCVI.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Mrs. Helen Maria Stanley.

London.

AS my dear Aunt, by her kind reception of my letters, encourages me to write as often as my constant engagements will permit, I sit down to inform her, that yesterday I visited Woolwich, a chief repository of these naval stores which constitute the defence of Britain, and Greenwich,

the noble asylum of those aged heroes who have been its glory.

But how shall I describe these monuments of British wealth and munificence ! I can only tell you, in general, that, in Greenwich Park, the simple and the grand are so happily united, as to heighten the effect of each other ; and that the Hospital (in fact a magnificent palace) is of such magnitude, that six hundred men dine in one hall. That it contains (if my information be good) two thousand five hundred souls ; and that its annual expence is about eighty thousand pounds.

As I stood at the highest part of the Park, surveying the rich and varied landscape before me ; the sails appearing from behind the trees, and then vanishing, as if by enchantment : As I looked round on the old "hearts of oak," and saw contentment smiling sweetly on every weather-beaten brow ; as I visited their little cabins, adorned with trophies from both Indies, with paintings of their former floating habitations, with sculpture of Paris plaster, and literature, from "Black eyed Susan," and the "Sailor's last farewell," I felt in my heart such a mixture of melancholy complacency and tenderness, that I could hardly forbear exclaiming, Why is not my dear Aunt here ! She is formed to relish this scene.

I had

I had many delightful communings with the old tars ; and the feelings they awakened were worth " a thousand hornilies." One Brown-face told me, with a strut and a swell of his old bosom, " that he thanked God he had had the honour to be wounded in three engagements, and to drink salt-water twenty-seven years, so he thought he had now a title to some fresh."

Another declined shewing the ladies the principal ward, " because the stair would fatigue them ;" but, in the honest pride of his heart, led us half a mile round, to shew us his own cabin, which the fly rogue had decked out with shreds of chintz, ivory boxes, pieces of mirror, and such gewgaws, (as he said,) to please the women.

Whilst I was gazing with silent satisfaction on a countenance full of benignity, and wondering at the attention with which a pair of dim eyes (that had once been bright) were surveying a set of China, neatly arranged on a small wooden shelf ; " Looke, there now, Madam," said the proprietor, there is a set of tea-cups for ye ! I would not give them to his Majesty, God bleſſ him ! for twenty guineas of gold. I saw them made with my own eyes ; and there, d'ye see, is my own and my wife's effigy—that is to say, (with a heavy sigh,) when she was alive. I could not match them, God bleſſ you, in all London."

London." Jack was certainly right. In reality, none but themselves could be their parallel. I secretly rejoiced to think that, as they were out of the reach both of cats and of children, his poor harmless hobby might last as long as himself, and neither cost his vanity a pang, nor his heart a sigh.

And now let me reproach you for your long unkind silence. Is it, that you think your Lucy stands no longer in need of your admonitions, or is not sufficiently grateful for those you have bestowed? Trust me, these suspicions are alike groundless. My mind is a soil so fruitful of follies, that it requires a hand like yours, equally diligent and judicious, to root out the weeds, and to plant in their stead all those amiable virtues with which your own is so richly stored. But, I suppose, since I sent you Rollin, you have abandoned your charge, for the sake of measuring the pyramids of Egypt, or cutting a way for Hannibal over the Alps. Should I find that, by supplying you with amusement, you are tempted to deprive me of instruction, I will certainly never furnish you with any thing more serious or interesting, than the Macaroni Magazine, or —the debates in parliament.

I am surprised and shocked with the number of beggars who crowd the streets here,

here, in spite of the vast sums annually given in charity. The marks of vice and excessive depravity which they bear about them, excite more disgust than compassion. In the country, we are charitable from feeling; in cities, we must be so from principle. In this respect, the wisdom and the goodness of God are alike conspicuous in the intellectual oeconomy. Tender impressions, in which the mind is passive, become weaker and weaker by repetition; whilst frequent acts strengthen and confirm good habits. Thus, whilst the sight of human distress becomes less affecting by being familiar, the benevolent principle is strengthened, by the habit of relieving it.

I do not think it necessary to quote authorities whenever I say a good thing. Sometimes I forget to whom I am indebted; at others, I flatter myself that I have no other authority than my own: But, if you love to see a great name tacked to the end of every wise sentence, you have only to place that of a Locke, a Sherlock, or a Butler, (to whom I believe it is due,) to the above cited.

Though this day is appointed as a general fast, I feel no remorse for employing part of it in this manner, as writing is not the sin that most easily besets me, and I have had all the morning to repent of the others.

others. As I waited in the passage for Maria to go to church, I could not help smiling, on hearing the footman ask the postilion, "What was the reason of two Sundays in the week?" "A very good reason," replied the other, "that people may go to church, and pray for the sins of the army." Now, if John's be a true state of the case, these appear to be in so thriving a condition, that I really do not think they require the aid of my prayers. They are ever your's, however, my dear Aunt, with ardour and sincerity, for I am your affectionate and dutiful niece,

LUCY HERBERT.

LETTER XCVII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

I THANK my dear friend for her solicitude about my health, which is good, and my spirits, which, in general, are easy and serene.

Though the safety of the amiable Rivers cannot fail deeply to interest me, it is not on his account alone that I am in anxious expectation of news from America. It is generally thought that on the present important crisis depends the fate of the British empire. After a progress so rapid

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in luxury and refinement, we are taught, by the fate of other nations, to expect that it will have a quick decline. Whilst we deplore our licentious principles, and dissolute manners, as a nation, be it our care, as individuals, to stop the torrent of vice and folly, by cultivating every noble and generous sentiment, and displaying a virtuous and exemplary conduct.

Sir Charles is gone to — for a few days, on particular business. He flatters me most agreeably, by his impatience to return, and by assuring me that mine has spoiled him for relishing the conversation of all other women. It is certain, to those accultomed to the society of friends, that of mere acquaintance seems very insipid.



Rosebank.

At length the long wished packet from Charlestown is come, and brings the agreeable accounts of the safe arrival of Lord Rivers.

He writes both to his father and sister; gives a pleasing description of his voyage; says the sea air has been of the utmost consequence to his health; and desires Lady Sophia to assure me, that, in a very short time, he will get rid of every uneasiness.

—Generous,

—Generous, friendly Rivers! most grateful do I feel for this attention.

In the absence of my husband, I came here to spend the day with Mrs. Clifford. She seems perfectly happy and contented.

Ah, my friend! what a criminal prostitution of fortune is it, to spend as much on a week's amusement as would serve to render such worthy and virtuous people comfortable for a year!

While my kind hostess is engaged in some domestic affairs, I take up my pen, and address you with peculiar pleasure, from her quiet mansion.

Close by the window where I am now writing runs a transparent brook, with a soft murmur that soothes every thought to peace. Every object around conveys the idea of simplicity and rural quiet. One large tree shades a pool, where a woman is busied in rinsing her linen. A little below, under a one arched bridge, where the water breaks over some rugged stones, the schoolboys, from the adjacent village, stand angling for minnows. The clack of a mill, and the sound of the cascade, I have formerly mentioned, complete the rustic scene. Methinks, Maria, with health and peace, and a few agreeable associates, one might—

Tuesday.

Tuesday.

I was interrupted yesterday by Mrs Clifford, who entered the room in great haste, telling me, that a chariot had broke down on the road, at a little distance, and that a countryman, who was present at the accident, came to inform her, that the gentleman to whom it belonged was much hurt, and begged permission to rest a little at her house, till another carriage should be procured. We instantly despatched James, who attended me, to assure the gentleman of every assistance in our power, and to entreat him to accept of such accommodation as Mrs. Clifford's house afforded, till a carriage should be brought from Harwood.

In a few minutes the door opened, and an old man entered, leaning on Janies, with a striking and graceful figure, but a countenance stern and unpleasing. He seemed to walk with great pain, took little notice of Mrs. Clifford or me, and no sooner was seated on the couch, than he began to curse the bad roads, rail against his driver's carelessness, and concluded with saying, "Did you know what a damned unlucky fellow, Ladies, you have got into your house, you would turn me out of it, lest it should be on fire before morning. Devil take me if I don't believe that all

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the monsters of the zodiac were in conjunction at my birth."

We were both at a loss what reply to make to this strange address; but the surgeon from the village just then making his appearance, we retired, and left the old gentleman to his care.

Upon receiving a message to return, we did so. "I told you how it would be," exclaimed he, "the small bones of my ankle broke; next time it will be my neck I suppose."

On seeing little Clara enter, "Come hither, my pretty chit," cried he, "you shall be my nurse. How old is the little hussey, pray? The sweet child, to my utter astonishment, went up, and looking in the old man's face, "Mamma says I am almost five, Sir, and she never told a lie in all her life, and neither will I." "I doubt that much," replied the humourist, with a grin of approbation; "but, however, I do think you are too young yet to flitter, and wheedle, and deceive, like the rest of your treacherous sex. Pray, will you have me to be your husband, and you shall ride in a coach?" "No, thank you, Sir," replied the child, "but you may be my Papa, if you please." "Aye, aye," resumed he, "all art and cunning the moment they burst the shell! And, pray, which of these Ladies is your Mamma?"

"This,

"This, here, Sir, is my own Mamma, and Lady Mortimer is my t'other Mamma."

"Lady Mortimer!" exclaimed he, with a look of astonishment, "Is your name Lady Mortimer?" I answered in the affirmative. He held out his hand: "Come hither, child." I rose, he took hold of mine, and looking earnestly in my face, "Yes," continued he, with tears in his eyes, "She is, she is the daughter of my poor unhappy, beloved"—then pausing, "Do you know, madam, I am Lord Belmont your uncle, and can give you fifty thousand pounds if I please. I see I shall not long want an heir to my estate. Nay, never blush, child. Harkee, your father was a damn'd rascal—but no matter; you may be a good girl for all that. I did intend to see with my own eyes, whether Sir Charles and you deserved all I heard of you, before I discovered myself; but, if I propose one thing, the direct contrary is sure to happen: And I believe in my conscience, the surest way I could get to heaven, would be to set out post to the devil."

As I now began to understand a little of my Uncle's character, I endeavoured to accommodate myself to his humour, and told him that, in his next journey, I hoped he would make Harwood his purgatory, or middle state, when I would do all in my power

power to convince him, that he was not so very unfortunate as he thought himself, by introducing him to a new relation, who, I hoped, would seem worthy of his friendship.

At that instant Robert came with the coach, and informed me that Sir Charles was just arrived. As it was impossible to remove Lord Belmont, I insisted on leaving James to attend him, though he declared he would have no nurse but little Clara, whose frankness had quite captivated him.

This morning Sir Charles and I waited on him. He received us with much kindness, but talked to Sir Charles in a manner which obliged me to quit the room. What pleasure, my dear Maria, can a man find, in putting a modest woman out of countenance? Does the circumstance of her being married authorise such licentious freedoms? For my part, there is a sacredness in the name of wife, which makes me a thousand times more easily hurt, by any insult of this kind, than formerly: And they must be strangers to the nature of true delicacy, who suppose it less essential to the married than the virgin state.

Lord Belmont expresses much satisfaction in the care and attention of Mrs. Clifford; and, from the great partiality he shews to Clara, I am inclined to hope he may

may be led to do something for her mother. His fortune is large, and my good offices shall not be wanting to engage him to do so. Adieu, dear Maria, adieu.

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER XCVIII.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Mrs Helen Maria Stanley.

London

THE reception you give my letters, my dear Aunt, makes me both happy and vain, and induces me to take up my pen as often as I have a moment's leisure. Indeed, the avocations here are so many, that I can hardly find time to say my prayers, unless when I send them post to Heaven by way of ejaculation.

Tell my uncle, he does me great injustice in thinking I forget him, because I do not communicate to him all the wonders of this little world. I know he is a philosopher, and, as such, that it would reflect on his understanding to believe any thing he has not seen. And, though I may venture to pour my intelligence into the cherished ears of sweet credulity, he surely would not have me suspect him of any degree of faith unbecoming a gentleman; and,

and, to credit all my information, requires a larger portion than usually falls to the share of such enlightened minds.

Our enormities, my dear Aunt, in the way of dress and amusement, do indeed exceed all belief, and call loudly for the lash of criticism. The keen, the delicate edge of Addison's wit would have been thrown away, on the gross absurdities of our days. I am just returned from the Opera, fatigued and disgusted beyond measure. Heavens! how astonishing, that people should boast the privilege of reason, and yet submit with patience to behold this last insult on taste and understanding!

The first piece I witnessed was that of Jerusalem Delivered. I was told it was a serious opera, and, accordingly, before the curtain drew up, had composed every muscle of my face into a corresponding gravity. Judge, if my risible faculties could remain undisturbed, when I saw the noble, dauntless, heroic Tancred, swim in, with a hoop petticoat, brocade coat of mail, and visor glittering with diamonds, and heard him squeak forth his unquenchable love of glory, in a recitative so soft, it might have been mistaken for a funeral dirge. His martial ardor, too, seemed to receive such a violent shock, by the breaking of a string in a huge bass viol, that

the audience were led to suspect, from his visible discomposure, that this boastful hero was a mere bravo.

The next opera presented two conscious lovers on the very brink of an explanation. During a long symphony, the lady stood on the tiptoe of expectation ; and the impatient gallant seemed just ready to pour forth his transports in due form ; when, to the amazement of the spectators, he faced about to the stage, and addressed a most divine air to an oiled-paper moon, which at that instant rose in cloudless majesty, behind one of the scenes.

In the last piece, I was dreadfully alarmed by the entrance of an enraged and jealous lover, who, fierce as a tyger, flew to seize his rival, and plunge his dagger in his breast ; when lo ! arrested by his enchanting accents, he stood meek and silent, by the side of the hated rayisher ; who not only diverted him from his bloody purpose, but sung him out of it altogether.

If one has the misfortune to be but imperfectly skilled in the Italian language, it is impossible to guess the drift of the author, as all the passions that can assül the human heart have here but one mode of expressing themselves.

A bravo assanlts with the accents of an angel ; a rival gives the lie with a trill and a cadence ; and a man's mistress sings her denial.

denial so melodiously, that I do not see how it is possible he can believe her in earnest.

I am always so, when I assure my dear Aunt of the respectful gratitude and affection of her

LUCY HERBERT.



LETTER XCIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

LORD Belmont being quite recovered, came here, and spent some days, much more to my satisfaction than I could have believed possible. Little Clara was his companion. I am pleased to see his growing fondness for the child, and venture to form the most happy presages, respecting her future fortune, from that circumstance.

My uncle seems to be one of those strange people, who hide a tender heart under a rough and even rude manner; who, by assuming a certain bluntness and peculiarity of behaviour, think themselves privileged to shock all their quiet unoffending neighbours, and say and do just what they please.

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How many good people are there in the world, Maria, who, from want of that nice discernment, and quick sense of propriety, which we denominate good taste, or from little petulancies, and particularities of temper, would have rendered me most unhappy ! The singular delicacy of Sir Charles's mind gives me a freedom and security in conversation with him, which is the very soul of social intercourse. And I think I may venture to promise so far on our tempers, that we will never give each other pain, either by wilfulness, caprice, or unkindness.

For this best of men it has been reserved to restore me to the enjoyment of life, and even awaken a wish that it may be prolonged. And, oh ! to me may it be granted to sweeten every subsequent hour of his ! To anticipate his wishes, smile away his cares, soothe his inquietudes, and, by finding my own happiness in promoting his, to render existence a blessing to both,

I cannot better describe my present situation, than in the words of Lord Bolingbroke : " I enjoy that quietness of mind, which is never greatly interrupted by the cares of the world, and which often rises to that cheerfulness which disposes me to wish well to all around me."

We are just returned from church, where we have heard a noble discourse, and

and most heavenly music. I know many people would have nothing to mingle in our religious worship but what is purely spiritual. For my part, I do not expect to see mankind, on earth, exalted to the dignity and privileges of angels. And so great an advocate am I for interesting the external senses in our devotional exercises, that I would wish to take all the aids to mine which the fine arts, especially music, could supply.

How much, Dear Maria, are we indebted to the divine goodness for minds formed to relish a species of happiness, which, I fear, is but little known to the generality of mankind! Some restless care, some secret apprehension, some hidden source of disgust or uneasiness, seems to disturb the mind of almost every person I meet. Whilst, in the pleasing care of rendering each other happy, the moderate and grateful enjoyment of the goods of fortune, and the regular discharge of religious, social, and domestic duties, we taste that sweet and serene contentment, that approaches nearest to what we imagine must constitute the repose of the blessed.

May it be our care to improve those affections and dispositions the Almighty hath bestowed on us, that the connection which here makes our whole happiness

may be worthy of forming a part of it hereafter. So prays fervently your

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER C.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

IT will give pleasure to the most benevolent of my friends to be assured that I am continuing, with a grateful heart, to enjoy the various blessings with which I am surrounded. The happiness of my husband redoubles mine. Oh, Maria ! it is a noble, a generous joy I feel in conferring it.

My uncle has again paid us a visit ; he is kindly partial to me, and avoids those little improprieties in conversation which he saw gave me pain. He told me, that he perceived I could not bear a jest ; but he forgave me, as my shyness was the effect of my country breeding, not of affectation.

His manners have all that roughness and severity, which is usually acquired by living alone ; and which the tender and domestic connections insensibly wear away, or convert into that yielding complacency, that gives grace to virtue, and in mixed societies

societies in some measure supplies the absence of it.

He seemed very inquisitive about Mrs. Clifford, whose story I related to him, without mentioning the name of him who was the cause of her misfortunes. Next morning he came into my dressing-room, and taking out a paper, "Here, child," said he, "we must respect people's feelings as well as their necessities; give this to your friend when I am gone—to-morrow, I mean, for I have no thought of undertaking my last journey yet."

"You are a noble creature, and above the little dirty selfish arts of your sex. Besides, your boy shall have enough. Remember I won't have a girl. My little nurse will serve all the purposes of a daughter. I might have delayed giving her a portion (like others) till I could make no use of it myself; but I choose rather to see people look happy while I live, than be assured they will do so at my funeral."

On examining my deposit, I found in it a bank-bill for a thousand pounds. This generous gift will make Mrs. Clifford perfectly easy through life, and remove from her breast every anxious care, respecting a future provision for her child.

Ten thousand blessings on the donor! Take thy joke, good Lord Belmont, and let none dare to condemn thee, till they

can say, "I am free from weakness." Mean time, let thy disinterested kindness be a sanction for thine.

The melancholy truths you tell me, with respect to the licentiousness and universal dissipation that prevail in polite circles, make me shrink with apprehension, from the prospect of entering that world, where so many sources of disgust arise, and so many dangers await me. The profligate manners of those whose rank and fortune render the influence of their example not only contagious but extensive, is never enough to be deplored. Perhaps the evil might be remedied in part, were gentlemen in the country to educate their children, particularly girls, with proper teachers, under their own inspection, instead of sending them to crowded boarding-schools and academies, where the bad dispositions of one child often serve to corrupt the whole.

Conscious, my dear Maria, that I have not strength to struggle with so many adversaries as the great world supplies, I seek for shelter in the quiet of retirement. In doing so, I may perhaps be accused of betraying a feeble and dastardly spirit; but, if one is sensible of one's own weakness, is it not wiser to shun the combat, than risk being foiled in an unequal *contest*? If I cannot merit the laurel wreath,

wreathe, let me strive to cherish the olive-branch.

The amiable family at the Grove have been in dreadful anxiety for some days. By the last expresses from America, the situation of the two armies was such as made it universally believed that a general engagement was inevitable.

O Maria ! a thousand gloomy presages cloud my dejected soul, as often as I think on the amiable unfortunate Rivers. Dear and respectable friend ! if possible, more dear, more deserving then ever, may Heaven long preserve thee, at once to share and constitute the happiness of thy family, and the friends who truly love thee !

No longer conscious of entertaining a sentiment for which I ought to blush, there is a tenderness, a melancholy, connected with my friendship for Rivers, which has something in it inexpressibly affecting. It is a mixture of gratitude, admiration, and pity, of which none can judge, but such as have been placed in our very peculiar circumstances, and are acquainted, by experience, with the most tender sentiments of which the human heart is susceptible. Friendship for you, warm and sincere, holds, and ever will hold, a principal place in mine ; for I am unfeignedly your affectionate

JULIA MORTIMER.

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LETTER CI.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

YES, Maria, I love, I tenderly love Sir Charles. The generosity of his conduct laid the foundation of my esteem, his care to render me happy daily enhances my gratitude; and the delicacy of his affection has awakened in my bosom feelings which I thought were for ever banished, from thence.

To a heart so long a stranger to pleasure, there is a charm in loving and being beloved, in feeling one's self of the last importance to the object of one's best affections, that is a thousand times more delightful and endearing than any other earthly enjoyment.

Though, in spite of every effort, the memory of the past will at times obtrude itself, yet such is the effect of the constant cheerfulness of Sir Charles's temper, and his solicitude to procure me every species of amusement, that mine insensibly catches the tone of his mind.

My tranquility is uninterrupted, my spirits easy, my fancy occupied with the most agreeable images, and my heart contented, and

and full of hope. What a happy, happy change, Maria, from that joyless apathy, that listless dejection, to which you formerly beheld me a prey!

Sir Charles and I are just returned from visiting a remarkable fine seat in this country, where English magnificence is profusely, but, I think, injudiciously displayed. I was a good deal disgusted with what seemed to me a violation of that unity of design which characterises a just taste, and that obtrusive display of art, which generally betrays a bad one. Upon reflection, however, this may not be so ill-judged as I at first imagined. In this country, the productions of Nature are so various, grand, and beautiful, that perhaps the only way to increase the effect of her charms, is to oppose art as a foil to her. Certain it is, that, after being tired with level lawns, regular gardens, smooth canals, and gilded temples, I returned with redoubled delight and admiration to the roaring torrent, the mist-clad hill, the wild wood, and winding stream.

The Cleveland family were of our party. Rivers, the amiable Rivers, was the subject of our conversation, as often as Lady Sophia and I found an opportunity of withdrawing from the company. Her gentle heart is overwhelmed with anxiety on his account. She says there is a despondency

and dejection visible in the stile of his two last letters, that exceedingly alarms her. Alas ! what can I say to give her comfort !

I have been enjoying a solitary walk in the wood. How sweetly in harmony with my soul are the solemn objects I have been contemplating ! The moon, slowly rising behind the hill, is enlightening, with her trembling beams, the smooth surface of the water, and checkering the wood with a thousand fantastic shapes. How still is every object ! The silence and solitude that surround me, are delightfully in unison with the serenity of my mind. I look back, Maria ! a tear steals down my cheek, and a sigh swells my bosom ; but there is a luxury inexplicable in such a mild sorrow, as reflection now excites in that of your friend.

Think not that mine is wholly confined to this low and limited sphere. I lift my eyes to unnumbered worlds, that roll in silent Majesty through the vast expanse of heaven, and my soul to Him who created them.

How wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty, in wisdom hast thou made them all !

And yet, my friend, there are, whose narrow capacities comprehend not a general monument ; who derogate from the power

power and wisdom of the Supreme Being, by supposing all those glorious luminaries created for the benefit of a single order of existences. Blind and selfish ! your adorations arise from conceptions of the Deity, which in effect render him less worthy of being adored. It is thus that the wisdom of God makes even the weakness and presumption of men to praise him.

Farewell, my reasonable, my pious friend ! I write to you the thought of the moment : To apologise for addressing to you those that are serious, would be to insult your understanding, as well as to injure your friendship. My esteem of the one, and gratitude for the other, shall be as lasting as the life of your

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER CII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

FATIGUED, for some days past, with the society of people but little agreeable or interesting to me, on their leaving Harwood this morning, I felt like one escaped from prison. I rambled into the wood ; the sun shone with that mild lustre

lustre peculiar to this season ; I was never weary of congratulating myself on the length of the day before me, and spent the first hours of it in planning employment for those that were to succeed. They are come to a close ; and, on inquiring how they have been filled up, I find they have passed as in a dream, of which hardly one trace remains,—judge what satisfaction I can have on the review.

Is not this, my friend, a just emblem of life? Are not its first years spent in learning how to live? Does not the future employ all our hopes and desires? Is not the present suffered to steal away unnoticed, unimproved, and even unenjoyed? And does not life itself come to an end, before we have attained the true art of living?

I have just parted with the amiable Lady Sophia. Sir Charles is gone to attend her home. I think she has infected me with her melancholy apprehensions. Suspense, added to fear, seems almost too much for a mind so femininely sensible as her's. May pitying Heaven relieve her, and avert every evil from the brother of her heart! Oh may he yet return, the cheerful, engaging, estimable Rivers, that first I knew him!

Sir Charles is arrived. He looks up to my window I understand his smile of invitation, and will accompany him to our evening

evening walk. How easy is obedience when love makes duty delightful !

Ah, Maria ! what do I see ! Lord Cleveland's servant in tears ! He delivers a packet to James—Sir Charles enters—Oh ! Heaven support us ! my fears are justified !—Rivers, the best and dearest !—O Maria ! Rivers is no more !—



LETTER CIII.

Sir Charles Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

THE inclosed letter, my dear madam, will probably render further information superfluous. You will see by it what an irreparable loss his country, family, and friends, have sustained, by the death of the most excellent of men, the gallant, generous, noble Rivers !—Oh, Miss Herbert ! what heart but must sympathise in a sorrow so extreme, yet so reasonable, as that of his desolate family ! I fear my Julia feels it too deeply. Though prepared by her fears to expect the fatal news, the suddenness of it so entirely overcame her spirits, that, on entering her room, I found her just sinking from her chair, and fortunately

nately reached it in time to prevent her falling to the ground.

She is quite composed, but so greatly afflicted, that I will make no apology for quitting her friend, to try, by sharing, to soothe the sorrows of the most loved and deserving of the human race.

Do me the justice, dear Miss Herbert, to place amongst the most sincere of your friends, for I am truly

Your respectful, affectionate,
And very humble servant,
CHARLES MORTIMER.



LETTER CIV.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

MARIA! what a dark, what a mysterious plan is that of Providence! The good, the exemplary are taken away; the wicked live, nay triumph in their crimes! What need have we of the anchor of hope, to hold us firm amidst the storms of adversity! what need of the prospect of the next world to support us under the complicated trials of this!

Sir Charles, ever kind and watchful, insists on my quitting my pen. His tender anxieties

anxieties ought to be quieted ; they affect me deeply. I look up, and see the tear of sympathy trembling in his eye : I start at the recollection, that Mortimer, like Rivers, is mortal. I say to myself, if I linger here a few years more, my age will be without friends !—

Yet, let me not say so. There is one friend, the friend of human kind, the friend both of soul and body, on whom I may and will depend. O blessed reliance ! of which, neither time, accident, nor death can deprive me ! which is not affected by the changes of this transient scene, and the object of which becomes more precious to the soul, in proportion as the glory and excellence of all terrestrial objects vanish away.

Sir Charles sends Sally to entreat me to have done. She shall transcribe the fatal paeket ; I am really unequal to the task.
Your

JULIA MORTIMER.



Lady Sophia Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

THE most heavy tidings that ever pierced the heart of an afflicted father reached mine last night. He did not find
courage

courage to communicate them till I returned home this morning.

Our distress may be conceived, but not described.

Perhaps, my dear Lady Mortimer, it may be safest for us all to meet now, when our grief can admit of no addition.

Read the inclosed. Oh, how it will affect your gentle heart ! Mine longs to mingle its sorrows with your's, but a father, sinking under intolerable anguish, demands all my duty and care. Ah ! would to heaven I could alleviate his sufferings, by taking them on myself ! Alas ! the weight of my own is more than I can well support.

I know your compassionate heart would indulge the fulness of mine ; but I am unable to write on this subject, or think of any other. Pray for me, my dearest, kindest friend : I have much need of comfort from Heaven, for I shall find none on earth. Oh, Lady Mortimer ! you knew his virtues, you will cherish his memory. And whilst, like me, you strive to forget your selfish sorrow, to rejoice in the secure felicity of the most exalted of the human race, you will pity the desolate, the disconsolate sister he has left behind.

SOPHIA RIVERS.

LETTER

LETTER CVI.

Captain Stanley to Lady Sophia Rivers.

Charlestown.

THE fatal news I am about to communicate, can neither be alleviated by caution, nor render less grievous by delay. Unhappy am I, in being forced to become the messenger of such distressing intelligence!

Dearest Lady Sophia, let me conjure you to summon your utmost fortitude, whilst you read, that the best of men, the brother whom you fondly loved, expired in my arms, on Tuesday morning, the 1st of last. By his desire I address you on this mournful occasion. Alas! what can I say to alleviate your sorrow?

I feel myself quite unable to offer you that consolation, which I have not yet found myself, from the dictates of reason. Let us seek it in the hopes of religion; these are your's, and they will not fail you at this most trying crisis.

After the first violence of grief is abated, I know you will find a sad satisfaction in learning all the melancholy particulars. Anxious to administer to your afflicted heart, the only comfort now in my power to give—the only tribute I can pay, to the memory

memory of the dearest of friends, and bravest of men, I proceed to the dismal recital.

The moment I heard Lord Rivers was returned to America, I flew to meet him, too well assured, that, under the pressure of so heavy a disappointment, he would stand in need of all the support friendship can supply. I was exceedingly struck with his appearance, which betrayed no marks of violent or agitating sorrow, but far worse, of a calm and settled despair.

He gave me a most affecting account of his last interview with Lady Mortimer; and, at the conclusion of it, "Stanley," said he, "to have remained in England, would have been to increase my own misery," by disturbing the peace of that most angelic woman. Hope in this world I have none. What a wretch were I, after the avowal she has so nobly made me, could I indulge a wish to see her less perfect? No, Stanley, I am incapable of such baseness. No longer will I oppose the will of Heaven. But oh, may that Being who has so sorely afflicted me abridge my trial; nor condemn me to drag on a joyless existence—an exile from my country—a stranger to peace—for ever banished from her, whose affection was—O Stanley! is my *ALL.*"

The

The very next day, a secret and important expedition was concerted by Lord M—— and other officers, when your brother eagerly solicited permission to conduct the party. In vain his worthy patron endeavoured to dissuade him from the hazardous attempt; he was determined; and nothing could prevail with him to relinquish this opportunity of distinguishing himself.

The attack was made, and succeeded: But dearly did these conquerors purchase victory, by a loss never to be repaired.

Your gallant brother was brought home mortally wounded, and the ball could not be extracted, without hazard of instant death.

At his own desire, he was brought back in a litter to Charlestown.

Entirely ignorant of the whole affair, judge of my situation, when his servant, with a countenance impressed with horror, entered my apartment, and, breathless with haste, intreated me to come to his master without a moment's delay. I found him lying on his bed, supported by pillows. He held out his feeble arms to embrace me; but the ghastly features of my friend so shocked me, that I could not utter a syllable.

"Stanley! my best of friends," said he, with a voice scarcely articulate, "Heaven in mercy has heard my prayers, and I shall soon

soon be at rest.—Nay, weep not, I conjure you, but rejoice at my release." Then taking a letter which lay near him, and putting it into my hand, "to you, friend of my heart, to you I trust this last, this only proof of—why should I call it weakness?—of my unshaken fidelity to my Julia. Bear witness, Stanley, that I have ever loved her as she deserved to be loved."

Then taking Lady Mortimer's picture from under his pillow, he kissed and gazed on it; and holding it between his trembling hands, "Oh," cried he, with a voice interrupted by sighs, "may Heaven—may Heaven bless, comfort, protect my soul's dear treasure! and, this short life ended, unite again those hearts, which not even death can entirely divide!"

At that moment the chaplain, who had been sent for, came in; and, approaching the bed, grasped his hand in silent anguish.

"I request the aid of your prayers, my pious friend," said he. "Pray earnestly that I may find mercy—and soon, very soon, be permitted to depart in peace—but speak not of recovery—it is now impossible—I wish it not."

The worthy chaplain read the office for the sick, with a voice scarcely articulate. At these words, "After this painful life is ended, may he dwell with thee in life everlasting," he was joined by your dying brother

ther with a fervor which drew tears from the eyes even of the firmest.

The solemn service ended, on seeing us all deeply affected, he gently chid us for "our mistaken pity." He spoke with much tenderness of his father and sisters, lamented that they should suffer from an event which would procure his freedom from suffering—his everlasting felicity.

As he grew weaker every moment from loss of blood, he often pressed my hand feebly, without speaking. At length, making an effort to raise himself, "I am going," said he calmly, "and I am resigned. Stanley—kindest, latest friend, farewell. May Almighty God bless you, and bless, oh bless for ever my—my Julia!" Here his voice failing, he sank down, and breathed his last sigh in my arms.

What a short but glorious course has his been! Unequalled in dispositions, eminent for talents, and still more distinguished by the just application of them; he never failed, by his modest virtues, to conciliate the affection even of those who had not resolution to follow his example. Who would not covet a life so respectable, a death so glorious! Who would not aspire to be so generally beloved—so justly lamented!

He was interred on Thursday the 15th, with every mark of honour and distinction
in

in the power of Lord M——, and his other sorrowing friends, to bestow.

As nothing connected with one so dear can be uninteresting, I shall make no apology to his amiable sister for communicating the following little incident ; judging, from its effect on my own feelings, how tenderly it must influence your's.

Very early, next morning, I repaired to the spot where the sacred remains of my friend were deposited ; there to give vent to those sorrows, which it is pleasing to indulge, but painful to expose to observation.

Scarcely had I entered the church-yard, when my attention was engaged by a soldier, who was sitting at the foot of the grave, with his face covered with one hand, whilst the other, from which his firelock had dropt, hung motionless by his side.

I stopped a moment, that I might not intrude on his sorrow, but, on hearing the poor fellow sob aloud, I drew nearer.

At the sound of feet he started up, snatched his firelock, and hastily wiping his face, was about to retire. But, perceiving him to be a private in your brother's regiment, I stopped him, and, with a lively impulse of that sympathetic kind which tells us we are all brothers, shook him cordially by the hand.

“ Thomson.”

“ Thomson,” said I, “ do not let me disturb you. I come, like you, to drop a tear over the silent remains of the best and bravest of men.”

“ Oh, Sir ! O Captain Stanley,” cried the poor fellow, grasping my hand,—“ he was your friend ! you knew—all the army knew how brave—but only wretched I knew how wonderfully good he was !”

Here a flood of tears choked his utterance. “ It is but two weeks ago,” continued he, “ since he that lies dead there, saved me both from shame and death. My poor wife expired that morning ; my little boy was crying for hunger. I left the house in despair ; when, seeing his honour at a distance, I took courage, came up to him, and told him my distress. He put two guineas into my hand ; but unfortunately some of my comrades persuaded me to go with them in the evening to an ale-house, to try and cheer me a little. I was soon tipsy, not being used to liquor. They held me long by force ; at length I broke from them, and was hurrying home, when they overtook me, and trying to force me back, a quarrel followed. Lord Rivers at that instant came up, and attempting to separate us,—oh Sir ! , may God forgive me ! mistaking him for one of my companions, I gave him a blow. He ordered me into custody ; but, instead of the

guard-room, he made me be carried to his own lodging.

"Next morning, when I grew sober, I was like one distracted, and gave myself up for lost. He entered the room; I fell on my knees, but he did not suffer me to speak."

"Thomson," said he, "I forgive you; but remember your poor boy, who has none but you to depend on, and never again let me see you intoxicated." "I embraced his knees; but he broke from me, and would not hear me. Had he ordered me to receive some hundred lashes, and exposed me to the whole regiment, I might in time have forgot both my crime and my punishment. But he forgave me—oh Captain Stanley! he forgave me without one reproach; and by Heavens I will never forget him!—And yet," pointing to the grave, "there, there he lies. I shall never hear him speak—never bless him—never, never behold him more!"

Such, dear Lady Sophia, was the tenor of your lamented Rivers's conduct. Let us not indulge that excessive sorrow, which would unfit us for imitating his example; but moderate our own, by reflecting that he is now beyond the reach of those cruel pangs his death has inflicted; and for ever exempted, both from the weakness and sufferings of mortality.

I shall write to Lord Cleveland to-morrow. Mean time, assure his Lordship, and your sisters, of the most sincere condolence of

Your affectionate kinsman,
And most humble servant,

HENRY STANLEY.

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

LETTER CVII.

Lord Rivers to Lady Sophia Rivers.

(Inclosed in the preceding.)

BEFORE this reach my beloved sister, the sorrows of her Rivers will be no more. Let that thought yield you consolation, even amidst the extreme distress which my death must occasion to a heart so feelingly alive as your's.

Stanley will tell you all—my moments are precious—a few only remain: Let me seize one, to conjure my gentle Sophia, for my sake, to moderate her sorrow, and strive to repress it, in presence of a father whom it will now be doubly incumbent on her to soothe, support, and comfort.

To that respected parent you are now at liberty to reveal the only circumstance I ever attempted concealing from him. He will

will approve, and gladly fulfil the last request of his son, whose every wish he generously indulged, the moment it was known. You will learn it from the inclosed copy of my Will. The original is contained in the sealed packet, directed to Lady Mortimer, which you will have the goodness to deliver. Cultivate, I entreat you, for that best of women, a friendship commenced in sorrow, but which will contribute to your mutual comfort.

Sophia, my dearest Sophia, farewell. A little while, and the word farewell shall never more be repeated.

LETTER CVIII.

Lord Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

A FEW, a very few hours, and the fate of Rivers will perhaps be determined. An important redoubt of the enemy is to be attacked by day break. The attempt is desperate; who then so fit to conduct it as I? I have requested, and obtained that honour. A few truly British soldiers, volunteers in this hazardous enterprise, already surround my tent, impatient of my delay.—“I come, I come”—Julia! if I fall, I shall fall with honour, and you will not blush to say—Rivers was my friend!

My

My ardent prayers arise to Heaven for your happiness, and that of the generous Mortimer. At this moment I forget all the past. My soul expands with virtuous emulation. I reflect on his worth; I consider him as my friend; and the name of rival exists no longer.

Yet a little while, and all painful recollections, all mortal distinctions, will be at an end. Julia! a little while, and we shall meet where love will be no crime; where it will make our happiness, not our torment.

My heart dissolves in tenderness; tears rush to my eyes;—there is yet one way in which Rivers may still live—and live beloved.

A soft, a delightful tie, will soon be added to those which already bind you to the soul of your husband.—Julia! the name of Rivers may still be dear, still familiar.

—The clock strikes one—Far other thoughts crowd on my mind—far other dreadful scenes!—“I come, my brave companions! May Heaven assist and prosper us!”

Farewell, Julia! By time, absence, misfortune, every tender, mournful recollection, unspeakably endeared. Generous Mortimer, farewell! Ye are worthy of each other—in each other may you be completely blest.

In continuation.

Julia! 'tis done! my heart presaged aright—the hand of death is on me—and Heaven is gracious.—I know your gentle heart will deeply feel;—but do not grieve immoderately,—mine shall sorrow no more—

Julia! first loved, and latest remembered, accept from your dying Rivers—a solemn—a last adieu!

Oh! I have much to say—but strength fails—the mortal wound bleeds fast.

Hear me Heaven—O hear! and shower thy choicest blessings on the head of my love, when mine is laid in the dust. And, if she should remember with pity—perhaps with feelings still more tender—the once loved—unfortunate Rivers,—impute it not as guilt!

Julia now! Oh now, for the last time, farewell! My heart pants—my dazzling eyes—never again shall I trace that beloved name. For ever! Oh, treasure of my soul, farewell for ever!

RIVERS.

LETTER

LETTER CIX.

To Miss Herbert from Sally Dormer.

I AM afraid, dear madam, you will hardly be able to make out this letter, it is so blotted with my tears: How hard would that heart be that could with-hold them!

I always loved my dear master, but now I almost adore him. He retired to his dressing-room to read the packet; and I being in the next, sitting by my Lady's bed-side, heard him sobbing aloud, as if his heart would burst asunder. When he returned, and attempted speaking to my Lady, his tears quite suffocated him. I rose to retire, for I thought he would not like to betray his grief before his servant. My sweet Lady gave me a look of approbation. Yet, ah madam! why should men be ashamed to weep? Did not the same God form us both, with hearts to feel for the afflicted? Why then should that be called weakness in men, which is thought virtue in women? But I forget to whom I am writing. Pardon the boldness which is the effect of your indulgence.

I have not leisure to transcribe the Will of Lord Rivers, which is long; I shall therefore endeavour to give you a brief

account of the particulars. The titles, and half of the family estate, at the death of Lord Cleveland, descend to his cousin Mr. Stanley; the other half Lord Rivers requests his father to divide equally between his sisters. Out of his own estate, by his mother, he bequeathes one thousand a-year, after his father's death, to the eldest son of Sir Charles Mortimer, requesting that he may bear the name of Rivers.

He leaves a number of small legacies, among which are ten pounds yearly to his nurse, fifty to educate six poor boys; and, would you believe it, madam, sixty for mournings to me, "because of my care and attention to my Lady during her illness." Oh, madam! was not this kindly and condescendingly done in Lord Rivers? Sure I am, I shall remember him with gratitude the longest hour I have to live.

My Lady sent for me this moment. "Sally," said she, "order the carriage, and go directly to the Grove. Tell Lady Sophia I am unable to write, and Sir Charles will not consent to my going to see her just now. Entreat her to come to me, though but for one hour; I shall be better able to support the meeting with the rest of the family ~~at~~ with her were over."

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In continuation.

I am returned, dear madam, and at this moment Lady Sophia is above with my mistress. When I reached the Grove, I trembled so, my limbs could hardly support me into the house. When I sent up my name, the sweet young Lady came down, the very image of despair. The moment she saw me, she burst into a flood of tears : "Sally," said she, "you have a compassionate heart. You knew my brother well ; he has not been unmindful of you ; surely you will never forget him who was the friend of every one ?"

She stepped into the carriage, and desiring me to follow her, pulled up all the blinds, and gave a loose to her tears. Mine flowed incessantly ; but I did not presume to speak. "O Sally," said she at one time, had you ever a brother ? But I recollect you never knew the happiness of such a blessing, nor the misery of losing him."

She did not utter another syllable till we reached Harwood. Sir Charles came the instant the carriage stopped, and lifted her out. She really seemed more dead than alive. His eyes were filled with tears ; neither of them spoke. He supported her with his arm to the door of my Lady's apartment, and then left them, to indulge

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To take off something from our dismal silence, Lord Cleveland proposed driving me round the Park, while Sir Charles attended the young Ladies into the garden. I readily embraced this offer. The instant we got out of sight, the worthy old man gave vent to his sorrows, and alternately extolled the virtues of his son, and expressed the grief and despair in which his death had involved him.

We were so much engaged with this interesting subject, that we paid little regard to the length of the way ; but, on the horses stopping at the entrance of a shrubbery, we raised our eyes, when the first object we beheld was poor nurse, sitting in the Hermitage, and wiping away the tears which fell fast from her eyes.

The good creature arose the moment she perceived us, and attempted stealing away unobserved ; but my Lord, with his usual humanity, called her back ; told her he was sorry for her affliction, and making her a present, desired her to come every Sunday, and dine at the Grove ; and never omit bringing her little George, as he was resolved to superintend the child's education himself.

We entered the Hermitage. Ah, Maria ! what were my feelings at that moment ! I was leaning on his Lordship's arm ; he stood some minutes silent ; then grasping

grasping my hand with a look of unutterable anguish, and an accent that thrilled through my very soul, he cried, "Oh Lady Mortimer! there was a time!" here he paused, and perceiving my tears flow, "Forgive, O forgive," exclaimed he, "a fond afflicted father, for thus indulging himself at your expence. I know I ought not to reflect on the past; all that belongs to creatures so ignorant and short-sighted as we are, is to act suitably to present circumstances;—yet, at times, I am so weak as to accuse myself of having destroyed my child, by precipitating his entrance into the army."

I said every thing I could, to combat an idea, fatal above all others to the peace of a mind like his. I reminded him, that, though we confined our narrow views to second causes, and events which we termed accidents, there was in effect no such thing as chance; that circumstances seemingly most casual were all under the direction of a great, first, invisible cause; the wisdom of whose government, though we could not comprehend, it would be the height of impiety to question.

He listened to me with looks of benign complacency; told me that there was something so peculiarly tender in his feelings for me, and so soothing in my sympathy with him, that my society, and that of Sir Charles, was the only source

from

from which he could at present derive the smallest comfort ; he therefore intreated, if not injurious to my health, that we would indulge him with our company at the Grove as often as possible.

He showed me a letter from his son, which had likewise come in the last fatal packet. In it he mentions his wish to leave Lady Sophia his repeating-watch, which had been his mother's : But afraid to shew her a preference which might pain his other sister, he says, with a delicacy peculiarly his own, that it would oblige him if his father would accept of it, and bestow it on her as his own gift.

What a noble, what a delicate mind was his ! How superior, even on trifling occasions.

When deprived of such a friend, Maria ! the heart tastes no consolation equal to that of continually recalling his loved idea. Memory presents his form to our eyes in so lively a manner, that we see, we hear, we still seem to converse with the person once so dear ; and this imaginary intercourse becomes a real enjoyment. We repulse those whose importunate concern leads them to offer us premature consolation ; our grief becomes our only good ; it holds the place of our lamented friend ; and our self-love joins with our tenderness to render that grief unspeakably precious.

We

We take pleasure in recalling an affection, that at once flattered and delighted us; and congratulate ourselves on having had merit to deserve being the object of so tender and lasting an attachment.

Such are the soothing reflections that mingle with the various sentiments, which the death of the much loved, and most deserving Rivers, has awakened in my bosom. If they do not banish my sorrow, they seem at least to justify its violence, and, in time, cannot fail to alleviate it — Why, my friend! should we seek to do more? Alas! too soon do we forget even those we held most dear! And time, which dries up our tears, effaces also from our hearts, those pious affections, and virtuous resolutions, which accompany adversity, and are the precious fruit of early disappointment.

Farewell! I ever am your faithful and affectionate, though much afflicted friend,

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER CXI.

Miss Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London.

WITH all the painful solicitude and anxiety, which your situation and my friendship

ship justify, I expected the arrival of your last; and thank Heaven, that the same piety and peaceful resignation, which have attended you through every stage of your difficult journey, continue to support and calm your mind; the heavenly frame of which, appears to me more worthy of envy than commiseration.

May Heaven pity the disconsolate family of Rivers, whose sorrows are exquisitely embittered, and who needed not the anguish of this separation, to convince them of the value of the treasure they have lost! Oh, my friend! though power and riches, and honour and ambition, pass away, nor leave one trace behind, of all the restless desires they excited, or transient pleasures they supplied, let the remembrance of virtues and misfortunes like his be for ever cherished in our hearts; to chasten the arrogance of pride, moderate our wishes for prosperity in this ever-changing world, and teach adversity to look beyond it.

The variety of distressing circumstances in which you have been involved since we parted, have awakened the most restless desire in my breast, again to behold the friend I fondly love.

I had ventured to hint this wish to my most indulgent parent, who, ever ready to oblige me, cheerfully consented to my making you a visit; but last week, he was attacked

attacked with a slight fever, which renders it impossible for me to accomplish my journey at present. I hope it will not be long, however, before I shall in person assure my friend, of the lasting affection of her

MARIA HERBERT.



LETTER CXII.

Lady Sophia Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

Grove.

IT is with sensible regret, my dear madam, I am forced to be absent from you to-day; in order to receive those unwelcome visitors, whom custom authorises to intrude on the afflicted, with empty forms, and unmeaning expressions of condolence, and who, by imposing restraint on those violent emotions, and heart-breaking sorrows, in which they cannot possibly sympathise, render the weight of calamity insupportable.

And do you indeed, my kind, my generous friend, invite me to pour without restraint, into your compassionate bosom, the bitter sorrows with which mine is overwhelmed? Yes, I will thankfully accept this best privilege of friendship; a friendship which at present forms all my consolation.

lation. I will look up with wonder and gratitude to that Being who has raised up for me so powerful a support, in this hour of unequalled affliction.

Other friends say they pity, but you deeply feel for me; others advise, but you sympathise with me; others strive—O vain attempt! to lead my thoughts from the only object by which they can be engrossed, but you take a melancholy pleasure in enumerating and dwelling on those tender circumstances, which increase, and yet give an ineffable softness to my grief; and in applauding those virtues, which I know I ought more studiously to imitate, than vainly deplore.

From my dear afflicted parent I strive to conceal that distress, which would only serve to aggravate his own. It is my duty, my earnest desire, to console, not afflict him. Even the presence of my gentle Isabella gives me no relief. When she looks at me, indeed, her mild eyes are suffused with tears; she presses my hand with affectionate tenderness, and confesses that my sorrow, though extreme, is allowable. Her's—forgive me! appears too reasonable, too angelic, too dispassionate. She utters none of those touching exclamations, which, in a warm and artless mind, are the genuine language of deep felt distress. You, you alone, my dearest Lady Mortimer,

mer, can enter into every feeling of my soul ; on your's alone are the virtues of Rivers indelibly impressed, and only by you will they be everlastingly remembered, and tenderly and sincerely lamented

The heart labouring under sorrow and restraint, will at times burst forth with ungovernable violence. If my anguish appear to you excessive, my regrets immoderate ; if they will rob me of your tenderness, or sink me in your esteem, O tell me with your wonted candour, and I will restrain, if I cannot conquer them.

Aided by your pious example, and encouraged by your approbation, in a more resigned, quiet, and submissive state, I trust you will soon behold her, whom you honour with your esteem, and whose highest ambition is to secure the continuance of that blessing, by a conduct worthy of your approbation, and suitable to the character of your friend,

SOPHIA RIVERS.

LETTER CXII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

HOW different, how very different, Maria, are the sorrows occasioned by the death,

death, from wounds inflicted by the unkindness of a friend?

Where affection has been tender and lively, grief must be exquisite and lasting; but exempted from the anguish of wounded self-love, virtuous sorrow is peaceful and serene; and when soothed with the hope of immortality, by rendering us conversant with solemn and sublime objects, raises us above the little vexing inquietudes of this feverish life.

You will easily believe that my mind is often sad, and always serious. How gracious is Providence, in gradually unloosing those strong ties, by which our affections are held enthralled to the world! Methinks our departed friends form a sort of intermediate chain between this life and the next, by means of which, our thoughts can more easily ascend to those great, awful, and invisible objects, which are veiled from mortal sight; and realize these future scenes of inevitable glory, where those pure and exalted spirits, who formed our highest bliss on earth, appear to the triumphant eye of faith, awaiting, with hope and joy, the hour of our release from mortal toil, and of our entrance to immortal security and happiness.

I forget, Maria, that you are still unacquainted with Sir Charles, and fear I shall tire you with constantly repeating his praise.

praise. Yet, oh how can I forbear? How can I repress my admiration of his amiable dispositions, and exalted sentiments, of which every day affords new proofs!

He talks of our lamented Rivers continually, and with such tenderness, as not only renders the subject easy, but delightful.

Last night, the weather being remarkably mild, he asked me if I would accompany him the length of the garden. "There is one object there," said he, "which my Julia has too long neglected to visit." Then pausing a few moments, and deeply sighing, "You cannot now, with these dear hands, strew the laurel he planted, on the grave of Rivers; but, may not the friends he fondly loved, at least consecrate it with tears to his memory?" I thanked him with mine for this proof of kind remembrance, and most delicate friendship.

We set out: The sun's last feeble rays gilded the wood; he departed; and the pale star of evening, increasing in lustre as the shades gradually closed over our heads, served to guide us to the solemn scene of mournful recollection.

We walked so slowly, that, by the time we reached the alcove, where I rested a few minutes, every object began to assume that uncouth appearance, which is

borrowed

borrowed from the obscurity of the medium through which it is seen.

As we approached the well-known spot, a secret inexpressible horror seized me; my limbs trembled, my heart palpitated, and I stood some moments irresolute whether to proceed. Sir Charles perceived my emotion, and, reproaching himself for exposing me to it, by his rash request, intreated me to retire: But my curiosity was excited, by perceiving something white between me and the laurel. I asked Sir Charles if he knew what it was?

"If we cannot fulfil the request of our departed friend, my Julia," said he, with an affecting solemnity, "let us at least presume to interpret his wishes. If the thin veil which separates the visible from the invisible world, permit departed spirits at times to behold those left behind, the sacrifice of a grateful and unfeigned friendship, must supply them with pleasure, suited to the dignity even of their new existence."

By this time we reached the laurel, close by the side of which was raised a beautiful piece of architecture in the form of an altar. It was adorned with military ensigns; on the top of it was placed an urn of white marble, round which reclined, in different attitudes of sorrow, four figures representing the Virtues. On a small tablet, the following

lowing lines were inscribed, in black letters, of which Sir Charles gave me a copy, at my request, this morning; for such is the singular delicacy of his mind, that I know he would have felt awkward and uneasy in repeating them even to me, and it was then too dark to read them.

Sacred to friendship, constancy, and truth,
To all the charms of uncorrupted youth,
This monumental marble bears a name
For ever hallowed in the rolls of fame;
Their truest friend, their glory, and their pride,
The weeping Virtues lost when Rivers died!

Alas! an empty name remains alone
Of worth too early lost, too shortly known,
Yet, since denied to rear with pious hands
Thy sacred tomb, in distant hostile lands,
Accept, blest shade! the rites we here bestow,
To guard thy mem'ry, and to soothe our woe,
Affection's fond regret, and frequent tear,
Truth's ardent praise, and friendship's vow sincere,
The wish, which Piety herself might crown,
The wish to make thy goodness all our own,
To worth like thine a lasting being give,
And in our lives make each perfection live.

Your heart, my beloved friend, will supply, at this moment, the truest picture of my feelings, during that "tender walk." Ah, Maria! how many are the sources of elegant pleasure which sensibility awakens in the human breast! Nor is it only the source of our purest pleasures,

it is often that also of our most exalted virtues, by that quick perception of what is right and proper, and that disgust at what is mean and base, which it creates.

"How much," says my friend, "may you benefit yourself and others, by spending so many hours in retirement?"

Taking that for granted, which I think is very doubtful, whether I am capable at any time of doing so; yet you are not to learn, that affliction, by quenching the fire of imagination, depressing the spirits, and clogging the reasoning faculty, unfits the mind, either for the fallies of fancy, or the investigation of truth. By a slight exertion, we may conquer indolence, or excite industry; but what exertion will serve to shake off that torpid languor, which often invades our intellectual faculties, even in those situations that are thought most favourable for their exercise and improvement?

How humbling this to the boastful pride of man!

In every state of mind, and in all situations, my friend may rely on the invariable esteem and tender attachment of her

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER

LETTER CXIV.

Lady Sophia Rivers to Lady Mortimer.

Grove.

NOTHING surprises me more, my dear madam, than to hear continually of the deceitfulness and ingratitude of mankind. Happy am I in having never experienced either. It is surely our interest to believe the best we can of our species; to think of living among wretches and villains, is enough to render existence a burden. How much am I indebted to your tender sympathy—how much more to your generous candour? Many there are who will pity, some who will praise, but few, very few, who can remonstrate with delicacy, and blame with gentleness: Yet, such is the friend I have found in you! A friend, who seeks no other reward for the most disinterested concern for my welfare, than that I should join with her in doing every thing to promote it.

Methinks I cannot better repay your solicitude for the recovery of my peace and happiness, than by assuring you that I am doing every thing to regain them. The former is the object of my wishes; to it all my hopes are directed. The visits of the latter are so rare and transient to us mor-

tals, that I despair of renewing my acquaintance with her, till I shall meet her with my departed brother, in those unclouded regions, where she shall be securely—eternally my own.

I have enjoyed, for some days past, a sort of listless tranquility of spirit, which is not unpleasing. In such a state, we are prone to flatter ourselves, that we have overcome the world, because we feel a perfect indifference to all its pleasures and pursuits. But I know too much of my own heart to think thus. I know that, though grief may exhaust the powers of the soul, and lull the senses asleep, yet, when time hath moderated our affliction, they will again be roused by their proper objects; we will again feel that we have a violent struggle to maintain, and turbulent passions to conquer.

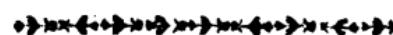
Since the hour that I lost the kindest of brothers, his image has never been a moment absent from my thoughts.

I know not to what cause it is owing, that I still enter every place where we used to be together, with a kind of vague expectation of beholding him; my wishes seem insensibly to convert themselves into so many realities; I often think I hear his foot on the stairs, I listen for his voice, I even fly to meet him. Ah, madam! what is my anguish, my despair, when I recollect that these eyes shall never more behold him! I strive

I strive to soothe my melancholy, at times, with the hope that Rivers is still sensible to the tenderness of my regrets, that he still pities those sorrows, which none was so ready to share or alleviate. An involuntary movement of my soul leads me to pour them forth, as if he were still present; and, even in this ideal intercourse, my oppressed heart finds relief, if not consolation. Tell me, my wise instructress, my dear Lady Mortimer, tell me, whether you think there is any foundation for these sentiments? whether you believe that our departed friends still take a concern in those once so dear? Sure I am, none is more tenderly interested in this question than you; for none ever felt more exquisitely than you all the delightful sympathies of love and friendship; none ever more deeply mourned the deprivation of them.

Adieu, my dear madam; by favouring me with your thoughts on this subject, you will add to the many obligations conferred on your grateful friend,

SOPHIA RIVERS.



LETTER CXV.

Lady Mortimer to Lady Sophia Rivers.

Harwood.

THE task you have assigned me, my dear but partial young friend, is one to which

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which my powers are by no means equal ; nor am I at present able to pursue so difficult a subject. When we meet, I will communicate my thoughts at large : Mean time, I will confess to you, that though the idea of our departed friends continuing to be the invisible spectators of our conduct, is extremely soothing, especially in the first hours of despondent sorrow, it appears rather to be the wish of nature, than the suggestion of reason. As it corresponds, however, with the most tender feelings of our hearts, and contradicts not the tenor of Scripture, I can see no harm in indulging it.

But, my dear Lady Sophia, there is a truth of a similar kind, which is highly interesting to our feelings, accords both with the light of reason and revelation, and which is of far more importance for us to ascertain, than to speculate about an opinion, with respect to which the mind must ever remain in a wavering and undetermined state ; I mean our mutual knowledge hereafter.

This conviction has not been the result of reasoning alone, nor confined solely to the learned and civilized part of mankind. The wilds of America furnish proofs of that " pleasing hope, that fond desire," of knowing and rejoining our dear departed friends, which to our limited conceptions, seems

seems almost essential to the happiness of heaven. The poor untutored Indian, who dreams not of any higher power, than that sun by whose beams he is warmed and nourished, cherishes as his last and fondest hope, that of being admitted beyond the mountains to the abodes of his fathers; and of recognizing there the beloved wife, or warlike son, whose loss has wrung his firm heart with anguish, though it has neither extorted one tear from his eye, nor sigh from his bosom.

When next we meet, this favourite subject will be matter of pleasing discussion: We will then have the aid of an abler casuist than either of us can possibly be: Meanwhile give free scope to your natural and innocent grief. Our emotions necessarily exhaust themselves by their own violence; and, when the first tumult of sorrow subsides, resignation will soothe your woes, and all will again become serene and tranquil, in that virtuous bosom.

We cannot, my dear friend, in this inclement region, expect to enjoy perpetual sunshine; but, by habituating our minds to look beyond it; though the clouds of adversity may darken our prospects, they will never overwhelm our souls. By uniting the important concerns of a future state with the virtuous enjoyments of a present, we taste the most exalted pleasures

of which we are capable. We give stability to those which are naturally evanescent; and, by extending our views to an external existence, elude the bitter reflection, that a few fleeting years must put a period to the fondest love, and most faithful friendship.

Whatever interruptions our happiness may receive from necessary trials, and unavoidable evils, may no perverse disposition, no guilty action of our own, ever destroy our tranquility ! May the enjoyments of life be received with thankfulness, its trials with submission, and the moderation of our desires and expectations, prove our security against its painful disappointments. Believe me, dear Lady Sophia, that I am your truly affectionate friend,

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER CXVI.

Lord Cleveland to Captain Stanley.

Grove

DEAR HARRY,

MY long and intimate acquaintance with your character, leaves me no room to question either the sincerity of your regrets for the untimely death of your loved friend and my lamented son, or your sympathy

pathy with my severe affliction. I accept of both, as well as your kind offer of spending a few days here, as pleasing proofs of your attachment to me, as well as respect to the memory of him, who lives no more, but in the hearts of such friends.

As I have heard it alledged, that want of fortune was the only bar to your union with a most deserving woman, allow me to put you in immediate possession of part of that estate, which, by the course of human affairs, will one day devolve to you.

In the happiness of others, my dear Harry, I must now seek for my own. Alas! Happiness and I will be forever strangers, till I shall be permitted to rejoin my dear departed son, in those mansions where alone we can hope to taste it pure, and to enjoy it without interruption. I am, with esteem,

Your friend,

And affectionate kinsman,

CLEVELAND.



LETTER CXVII.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

IN what terms shall I thank my generous friend, for the lively interest she takes

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in my happiness ! Every one is ready to commiserate the unfortunate ; but to share cordially in the prosperity of our friends, requires a much greater effort of generosity.

My loved Maria is not to learn, that Heaven, for the wisest ends, has disposed the human mind to sympathise much more keenly in the sorrows than the joys of others. The happy and prosperous are in a great measure independent of our good offices ; but all the influence of tender compassion is requisite to conquer our love of ease, and prompt us to afford the miserable that instant relief, of which they often stand in need,

Blest as I am at present, Maria, is it not criminal, is it not ungrateful, to allow any thing like apprehension to steal into my bosom ? Yet, there are hours, when a dark cloud seems to envelop every prospect, and neither reason nor religion can combat the gloomy fears which assail me. Think not, however, these fears are on my own account : No, my friend, tho' I have now the immediate prospect of one of the severest shocks to which the human constitution is subject, I bless God my mind is serene, and I am entirely free from those terrors to which our sex are liable in such circumstances. Believe me, when I consider the very limited period of our existence here, *it appears of small importance, whether we*

are

are called off the stage in the beginning, the middle, or the end of the day, provided we have aright discharged the part assigned us. But, though I fear not death, Maria, I fear, oh I greatly fear, the sorrow that would pierce the gentlest, kindest heart that ever glowed, should my approaching hour of danger prove that of our mortal separation.

Can I look around, and mark the course of human affairs, can I reflect on the mixed nature of all earthly enjoyment, the transient duration of all worldly prosperity? can I possess such singular felicity, and not rejoice with trembling?—Ah, Maria, you know not what it is to make the whole happiness of the person on earth most dear to you: It forms a strong, a generous tie. To dissolve it seems little less than to annihilate the very soul. But I forget myself. Pardon me for intruding on you with this melancholy subject, and hide, from an unfeeling world, sentiments of which it can form no idea, weakness for which it can find no excuse.

Just as I had finished the last sentence, which was wet with my tears, Sir Charles entered. A conscious blush, an involuntary movement to conceal what I had written, excited his curiosity; my tears increased it. I did not oppose his reading it; I thought it not amiss to suggest this sub-

ject to his thoughts, which I felt was too tender for conversation, I had twice endeavoured to introduce it; but, the moment I did so, my whole resolution failed, at the thought of giving him pain.

He looked at me some moments with unutterable tenderness: "Let us not fear, my loved, my admirable Julia," said he, "let us confidently trust. That Being who hath conducted us to each other, and bound our hearts together in the most tender union, will assuredly spare us to support each other through the labyrinths of life; to enjoy with thankfulness that singular felicity he hath bestowed, and to fulfil the gracious designs of his Providence, in dispensing to others a share of our own unequalled happiness."

In this manner does the best of men beguile me of my apprehensions; and, instead of reasoning with a mind, at present too weak to oppose arguments with any thing but fears, he soothes my inquietudes, and diverts my thoughts to future cheerful prospects; and, before our conversations end, I have often almost forgotten the painful subjects by which they were introduced.

I must not, however lose sight of that which engaged me to address you this morning. At this eventful period, I experience one of the desires most deeply implanted



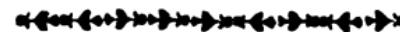
implanted in the human breast, that of living in the remembrance of those we have loved, " when the place that once knew us shall know us no more."

Accordingly, I have drawn up a paper, assigning to each of my friends some trifling memorial of me; and, what is of much more importance, have sketched out a plan, which I humbly think would prove most suitable to the situation of my infant, should it live to see the light. I have also written to my beloved husband, and said all which the most tender affection can suggest, to support and reconcile his mind to an event, which may be near, but which, I fondly hope, will still be long protracted.

The key of a small casket which contains these papers I here inclose, intreating my dearest friend to keep it till it shall be demanded from her. And now, these several tasks fulfilled, with a mind composed and easy, I await my approaching hour of trial, resigned, I humbly trust, to the will of my Maker. Since you cannot encourage me by your presence, aid me by your prayers. Maria ! need I say, be a mother to my child, if its own survive not. But I must quit this subject. May Heaven for ever bless my friend ! and may she never be without the same sweet consolation, in all the various situations of life, which

which her friendship ever poured into the bosom of her faithful, affectionate, and truly grateful

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER CXVIII.

To Miss Herbert from Sally Dormer.

Harwood.

REJOICE and thank Heaven with me, my dear Miss Herbert ; your beloved Lady Mortimer, and my dearest mistress, is this blessed morning the happy mother of a lovely boy. He is not quite so stout as could have been wished, but seems in perfect health, and, please Heaven, shall have the best of nursing.

Unless I could paint Sir Charles's looks, I need not attempt describing his happiness ; my Lady will soon, I hope, be able to tell you all about it herself. At present I cannot be wanted, and grudge every moment that I am forced to be absent from my sweet precious charge. O ! Miss Herbert, did you but see the dear little angel ; his mild eyes so like his father's ; but I hear him cry. Farewell, dear madam, in great haste,

Your very happy

Humble servant,

SARAH DORMER.
LETTER

LETTER CXIX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

Harwood.

ONCE more restored to health and happiness, once more I address my beloved friend, and call on her to join with me in thanksgiving to that God, who hath delivered me from danger, and made me the happy mother of a living child.

O Maria ! you must be a wife and a mother, the wife of Sir Charles Mortimer, and the mother of my boy, before you can form an idea of the new, the delightful sensations which expand my grateful bosom !

Never shall I forget the first sound of his feeble voice ; never, never, the look of unutterable transport with which his father gazed on his innocent countenance, placed him in my arms, thanked God for my safety, and blessed, fondly, repeatedly blessed me for this first pledge of conjugal felicity. Scarce would he allow me time to reflect on the enchanting novelty of my situation, or gratify the eager curiosity I felt to examine every feature of the little stranger. Again he took him in his arms ; again and again caressed the lovely unconscious

scious innocent; then restoring him to his fond mother, "My life! my Julia!" said he, with the most endearing tenderness, "the names of Rivers and Mortimer will now be inseparably united."

"Oh, may Heaven grant," rejoined I, "that the exalted virtues of each may be displayed in his advancing years!"

I am called away, Maria! a soft, an irresistible voice,—a language that pleads to the heart—pleads eloquently, allures me.—Can you interpret its meaning?

Sir Charles himself brings the impatient, importunate mendicant. Ah, Maria! would you were a witness of this enchanting scene! To wish you supreme felicity, is to wish you the principal actor in such another.

Again that feeble voice! "Cruel, un pitying, unrelenting"—Heavens! Maria, would you believe it, this is the language of my husband! I must no more. Adieu, adieu.

JULIA MORTIMER.

LETTER CXX.

Lady Mortimer to Miss Herbert.

YOUR delightful letter has reached me and convinced me, of what I could not otherwise

Harwood.

therwise have believed, that it was possible for my happiness to admit of an addition.

In the very zenith of gaiety, when the voice of a Tenducci, the violin of a Salomon, and the whole enchanting graces of a Siddons, combine to rivet you to London, can you, Maria! can you indeed be so generous, as to abandon that region of ever-new delight; to come down, in midit of December's cold, to bleak hills, naked trees, frozen rivers, and, defying both the allurements of pleasure, and the shafts of ridicule, exchange the drawing-room for the nursery, and the adulation of admirers for the cordial welcome of friends? Well, Damon and Pythias will no longer stand unrivalled in the records of fame. Britain, in our day, supplies a more exalted, more heroic proof of friendship!

To be serious, my beloved Maria, I am flattered beyond expression, by this new instance of your kind attachment; and feel more gratitude than I can possibly express, to Sir William, for consenting to part with you, even for the short period of a month.

Sir Charles is delighted with the near prospect of embracing the chosen friend of his Julia. He bids me tell you, that, if there is any vanity in your composition, the accomplishments of your new relation cannot fail to gratify it. For, though he
has

has been but five weeks in the world, he has made no small noise there; and by this, as well as by other achievements, has demonstrated, that his talents are inferior to none of his age; and seem well calculated for being distinguished, either at the bar or the senate, where sound seems to be the sterling commodity.

Come then, my best loved friend, and enhance the felicity of your Julia, by beholding and sharing in it. Come, and enliven her peaceful hours; come, and convince her, that love, without friendship, is but half enjoyment. O come! and join with her in adoring that Being who hath formed her heart capable of tasting the most pure and exquisite happiness, and blessed her with all those objects from whom it is to be derived.

Farewell, then, till we meet, my dearest, kindest friend. Farewell,

JULIA MORTIMER.



LETTER CXXI.

Miss Lucy Herbert to Lady Mortimer.

London

IN truth, my dear Lady Mortimer, I know not whether I ought to consider as

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an honour, or an insult, the offer you have made me of your correspondence; I fear it is only for want of Maria's that you content yourself with Lucy's epistles.

It is really unreasonable in your Ladyship to demand amusement from me, who have hardly as much left as to keep me from a lethargy, whilst you are banqueting on the luxuries of social joys. Could I play the hypocrite, I would tell you, that it is impossible for me to taste of any, in the prospect of a separation from my sister, at a time too when her presence is essentially necessary to my happiness; but this would be mere cant. You are heartily welcome to her, and the longer you keep her the better. She has piqued my pride, by testifying such joy on the prospect of leaving us.

All the return I ask for this disinterested conduct is, that you will transmit to me, by the earliest opportunity, an exact journal of the rises and falls in the thermometer of raptures. I suppose on Friday evening the mercury will mount as if heated by the scorching blasts of a south-west wind. But, oh the sinkings! when the sunshine of novelty ceases to warm the region of your brains, and custom adds chillness to the cold blasts of indifference! I beseech you enjoy the equinoctial point of calm contentment. During the meridian of your transports,

transports, you will find “ ‘tis bliss but to a certain bound,” and afterwards—But I may spare myself the trouble of prosecuting the subject; experience alone will convince us of certain disagreeable truths.

Maria only waits to see me fairly noosed: She would have written herself by this post; but preparations for a journey and a marriage furnish ample employment for all her faculties. I have had many letters from Harry, concerning the time when, and manner how, this weighty business is to be finished. For my part, while prudence and interest, and such pretending friends, were in arms against us, I could have set out in the waggon to meet and marry him: But, now that every obstacle is removed, I protest my resolution begins to stagger.—



He is come, my dear Lady Mortimer! he is come! “Who pray?” Why Harry Stanley, my lover that now is, and lord that will be to-morrow morning. “You wish to know how I behaved at our first meeting?” Just as might be expected. I had collected together all the receipts for reserve and decorum, all the maxims of matrimonial system-builders, (who terrify us with the danger of shewing a man that we love him, after we have vowed at the altar

altar to love him only, and love him till death.) But, whether from want of capacity, clearly to comprehend these refinements, or from a pure principle of contradiction in my nature, or from that nature itself stepping in before philosophy, and overturning all its maxims in a moment, I know not; but certain it is, the instant, the carriage stopt, my heart danced in a cotillion measure; I flew down stairs, left prudence to follow me, as usual, at her leisure; sprung into Harry's arms, told him I never was so happy in my life, and believed every word he said on the same subject.

Tuesday.

— Oh! I have done a deed
To make me think, who never thought before,
And pause, and doubt, and ask the wond'ring crowd
If I am really married? —

Heigh-ho, and so adieu to the dear delights of concealment—the heart beating pleasure of the postman's double knock,—the fluttering expectation while breaking the seal, and the transporting joy of reading the very soul of love. You may laugh if you will; but enthusiasm, while it lasts, is felicity; and enthusiasm and matrimony (pray look around you) seem utterly incompatible. For me! I am resolved to cherish

cherish it, till I have neither eyes to see, ears to hear, nor one spark of kindness left to warm that heart, which, with its best affections, bids me subscribe myself your friend,

LUCY HERBERT-STANLEY.



LETTER CXXII.

Miss Herbert to Mrs Stanley.

Harwood.

IT is really dangerous, my dear Lucy, to witness happiness, so compleat and so uncommon, as that which Sir Charles and Lady Mortimer enjoy ; and I should dread being envious of their felicity, did I not flatter myself that there is no room for envy in a heart where friendship has so long inhabited.

How amiable is true goodness, and how delightful the emulation it inspires ! The affability, the gentleness, the condescension, of my excellent friends, secure the warmest attachment from all their domestics, who serve them with a zeal and alacrity, in which a slavish sense of duty seems to have no share.

Their enlarged and cultivated minds, may justly be compared to the Hesperian trees,

trees, enriched at once with blossoms and fruit, the cheerfulness of youth, and the wisdom of age.

Attention and respect, so naturally flow from sincere affection, that I am never more shocked, than with observing that carelessness and indifference, whether real or affected, with which most men treat their wives in company. This must either reflect on a man's judgment, for having selected an unworthy partner, or on his heart, for neglecting to treat her with that respect to which she has a claim, both on account of her own merit, and the confidence she has reposed in him, by trusting her whole happiness to his care. How cruel, how ungenerous the man, who can wantonly abuse or betray such a trust!

Sir Charles's whole manner to Lady Mortimer, is expressive of the elegance of his own mind, and the gentleness of her's, and insensibly directs the attention of the company continually towards her. This obliges her to lead the conversation more frequently than is agreeable to a person of such singular modesty; but she does it with a grace so peculiarly her own, that one not only pardons her husband for imposing the task, but takes a lively share in the pleasures his animated countenance discovers on such occasions.

His

His fondness for his child is just what one could expect from a man possessed of so much tenderness. I have heard the happy parents canvass together the modern systems of education, when they have always agreed, that, since they could not form a world for their son, they would endeavour to form their son for the world.

" Could we fold up the young mind," said Sir Charles, " like the sheet of paper" to which it has been compared, till the ripened judgment could determine what characters were more fit to be impressed upon it, we might then safely follow the advice of some modern philosophers, and delay or omit altogether the chief object of education, that of inspiring just principles, and pious sentiments. But this is impossible: The ardent curiosity of youth, ever in search of food for its own indulgence, must be gratified. And, if we do not improve that important season, by proper culture, the world will anticipate the hour of reason, and, long before it arrive, poison the tender mind with the sophistry of prejudice, or enslave it to the anarchy of the passions:

" All objects derive force from novelty, and, in early life especially, we are prone to admire what is new. Is it to be supposed, with this bias in favour of what is fashionable in opinion, and at an age when pa-
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sion powerfully opposes the restraints of principle, that a young man is better able to form a system for the regulation of his heart and conduct, than his father, who, to the same strength of intellect, adds that experience, which confirms us in truth, by exposing to us the danger of error?"

Such are the sentiments of a man, the soundness of whose judgment unites with the sensibility of his heart, to give weight and propriety to all his opinions; I am proud to boast they are in every respect conformable to my own.

Adieu, dearest Lucy. I am convinced that, if felicity is attainable on earth, it is only to be found in the possession of a well-regulated mind; the exercise of pious and virtuous affections, and the enjoyment of the quiet, sincere, and elegant pleasures, of a domestic life, and rural retirement. In short, it is to be found in cultivating the dispositions, and imitating the conduct, of Sir Charles and Lady Mortimer. Adieu,

MARIA HERBERT.

F I N I S.



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